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# RETHINKING CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is just a year since the first edition of this book was issued. It found an interested public in the World Missionary Conference held at Tambaram in December last, and has since attracted widespread notice as the Press opinions at the end of this edition show. To meet the growing demand for the book, we are now bringing out this second edition.

We desire to express our thanks to reviewers and readers who have reviewed or referred to the publication with warm words of appreciation as well as to those who have offered criticisms. It has been described by one as "a book to love and quarrel with."

The writers stand by the main principles enunciated in the book. We recognise the supremacy of the personality of Christ in the religious evolution of the race. But the Christian evangel could not function normally in India until it is rescued from the ecclesiastical overgrowth that has come from the West and is adapted to the great religious heritage of this ancient land of religions. We are against the perpetuation and accentuation of the unessential, foreign and secular elements which at present dominate Indian Christianity, and are therefore suspicious of movements of Christian unity on lines which do not distinguish between Christian essentials and non-essentials.

The task envisaged requires prolonged and serious investigation, and can only be accomplished as a process in course of time. The writers are only giving expression to, and attempting to quicken the pace of, the great spiritual adventure in which the Indian Christian is engaged. We trust that the movement will gather momentum by contributions from others that share in the burden that has been laid on our hearts. For our part, we have planned to follow up this publication with other treatises with the same object in view. It is hoped that the next volume may be issued in the first quarter of the new year.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Except for a slight rearrangement of chapters and minor alterations, the essays have not undergone any change. By exercising economies, we are able to offer this edition at a reduced price so as to place it within reach of a wider public.

D. M. DEVASAHAYAM,

*Hon. Secretary, Bangalore Conference Continuation,*  
and

A. N. SUDARISANAM,

*EDITORS.*

*Madras,*  
*December 1939* }

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

That the Indian Church should think and act for itself and make Christianity an indigenous movement has been a burden on the minds of the great men who brought the Gospel to this land as well as those who accepted it. This urge has also come from Indian *bhaktas* and lovers of Christ outside the Church, who have repeatedly demanded that Christ should be related to the great Indian religious heritage and that Christianity should assume an Indian expression in life, thought and activity. The writers of these essays, too, have come under the influence of these ideals. Our group—represented by the Christo Samaj, an Indian Christian organization, the former *Christian Patriot*, an Indian Christian Journal which ceased publication some years ago, and the Bangalore Conference Continuation that has been in existence for over two decades—has been working towards this end, in its own humble way, for about a quarter of a century.

At the twenty-second session of the above Conference held last June, we decided to make the views of our group known to fellow Christians assembled from all parts of the world at Tambaram for the great World Missionary Conference. Separated by distance and pre-occupied with other duties, the writers were unable to meet together and consider the correlation of views. However, we determined not to lose this unique opportunity and hence prepared this book at the last moment, so that our views may not altogether go unheard at this juncture through default on our part. Each writer has pursued his own way and is solely responsible for his views; yet in the midst of the diversity an underlying unity of outlook and purpose will be detected.

Evidences of hurry will also be apparent and we crave the indulgence of our readers to overlook any inaccuracies, and defects in presentation and in manner of expression. These, we may perhaps be able to rectify, if a fresh edition is called forth.

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

We wish to express our deep gratitude to the Hogarth Press, Madras, for its ready co-operation and the special efforts it put forth in getting the book ready in barely a fortnight.

D. M. DEVASAHAYAM,  
*Hon. Secretary, Bangalore Conference Continuation,*  
and

A. N. SUDARISANAM,  
EDITORS.

Madras, }  
*17th. December, 1938* }

# *Section I*

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## CHAPTER I

# THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA

BY

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Chingleput.





# CHAPTER I

## THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA

By G. V. Job

### CREATIVE FORCES

#### PERMEATING INFLUENCE AMONG NON-CHRISTIANS

The strength and momentum of the Christian movement in India cannot be adequately measured by the numerical strength and the cultural and spiritual attainment of the Christian community. Remarkable as the achievement in the ingathering and consolidating of the Christian community is, it is not by any means the sole achievement of missionary endeavour. As pioneers in the field of modern education, as harbingers of a new day of hope to the outcaste millions, as exemplars of a way of life in which reverence for womanhood, sanctity of home, respect for human personality, played a determining role, Christian missionaries have spread a healthy and invigorating spirit beyond the limits of the community. It is not our intention to say that Indian culture did not recognise these values. But at a time when, owing to historical causes, Hindu India was unable to carry out in practice the ideals enshrined in its ancient literature, the new way of life for which the Christian movement stood proved to be a powerful spiritual ferment and stimulus. Enlightened Hindus acknowledge freely the service which missionary endeavour has rendered and is rendering to the country. By the eagerness with which they have adapted to the service of resurgent Hinduism not only missionary methods and organisation but also such things as congregational worship and books of family prayers, they have shown how deeply they appreciate the technique of the Christian enterprise. Resentment there is against the aggressiveness of missionary propaganda. National self-consciousness has created a desire to preserve something at any rate of the ancient culture on which many potent solvents are operating with alarming rapidity. A people agonisingly conscious of long political subservience dread the possibility of their coming under the religious dominance of the West. Yet it would appear that in their inmost consciousness they are aware of the supremacy of the claims of Christ. In resisting it they are

compelled to be on the defensive and cling to the untenable argument that Hinduism should be sufficient for the Hindu, since it is swadeshi article. Their standard of ethical values is nevertheless Christ-like character.

This permeating influence which has gone on in the past and will go on, regardless of the wishes and plans of both Christians and Hindus, is an important result of the missionary enterprise; and to our way of thinking an integral part of the Christian movement in India.

The new ferment has produced two new movements within Hinduism, one progressive, critical and reformist, and the other conservative and defensive. In the first flush of the new enthusiasm for reform, the liberal Hindu applied the pruning knife so freely that in the reform movement called Brahmo Samaj very little of the distinctively Hindu ideas and practices was left. To this bare skeleton of a simple monotheism, the flesh that was added was a genuine admiration for the human Jesus, which in the case of P. C. Mozumdar, the author of *Heart Beats*, at any rate, rose to loving devotion. And when Keshub Chandra Sen went out of the way to remove his countrymen's prejudice against Jesus by proclaiming that he was an oriental, Hindu reformers sensed danger. The Brahmo Samaj had gone too far, both in the pruning of Hinduism and in its approach towards Christ, though not to Christianity. The reaction from this on the part of the progressive Hindu manifested itself in the Arya Samaj and in the Ramakrishna movement. The Arya Samaj is as aggressive as any Christian missionary society, chiefly in re-converting from Islam and Christianity those, especially of the depressed classes, who had sought asylum in these alien religions. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, was a highly emotional mystic with a deep moral sense, and a child-like simplicity and forthrightness in his approach to men and situations. This movement found its combative and argumentative spokesman in Swami Vivekananda who early in life fell literally under the spell of this humble mystic. His followers are spreading the universal religion of the Vedanta in Europe and America.

The other movement is a movement towards stiffened orthodoxy. The assault of Islam and Christianity on Hinduism, and the way in which Hindu reformers reacted to it caused considerable agitation in the dovecotes of orthodoxy. Mrs. Annie

Besant with her irrepressible energy, wealth of imagination and unlimited capacity for invention and rapid accommodation to every change of circumstance, strengthened the knees of Hinduism by calling upon the Hindus to retain their caste marks, and by attempting to find a spiritual and esoteric meaning in every superstition. But as she was primarily a Theosophist, her programme of syncretism and her new gods and avatars could not satisfy the orthodox Hindu's demand for restoration to its pristine greatness and unquestioned authority, of every religious practice and social institution which the Shastras prescribed. Theosophy was too slender a staff for orthodox Hinduism to lean on. So the Hindu Maha Sabha came into being. It is fighting a losing battle, for the forces ranged against it are many. The Hindu intelligentsia, among which alone, the new ferment is working, cannot possibly go back to Hindu orthodoxy. The women's movement can no longer tolerate child marriage, and the unequal advantage which the man has in the Hindu marriage relationship. The Indian National Congress which has been invading the social realm with great tenacity of purpose has filled orthodoxy with alarm and fear. One cannot foretell what changes in the social programme of the Congress may happen if it loses the leadership of a reformer of the stature of Gandhiji, or if the communal bias of the present Indian Constitution is removed. For the time being the greatest political party of the country is ranged against the conservative movement.

In looking upon this remarkable unsettlement within Hinduism, one must remember that the whole process during the last thirty years has been dominated by political causes, chiefly by the new nationalism which has awakened a sense of jealous pride in everything Indian, and an eager readiness to sacrifice all, even Hindu orthodoxy or religion itself, if necessary, on the altar of political emancipation. There is a mild and not sufficiently aggressive demand for social justice. The clamant, aggressive, dominating driving force in the life of the Hindu intelligentsia is the political motive. The Moslem community, the next largest community in the land, is oscillating between radical nationalism, which drives some of its members into the ranks of the Congress, and communalism. The moment the fight with the British Government, their common enemy, is suspended and the parties sit down to divide their spoils, as they are doing just now, the thin bond of nationalism that binds them snaps, and communal rivalry of a largely

economic and political nature, breaks out into religious riots. Because of the political complication which is accentuated by the fact that Christianity, coming as it does from the West and supported as it is by the prestige of the West, is unfortunately regarded as the other arm of Western imperialism, it is difficult to assess at its true value the impact of Christianity in India in the religious sphere. A sample of this impact we find in the early Brahma Samaj. But the political situation has retarded and almost killed this movement.

#### THE COMING OF AGE OF INDIAN CHRISTIANS

The next great result of the missionary enterprise was the coming of age of the Christian community which resulted in the formation of the National Missionary Society. The stimulus which this gave was so powerful, that even before attaining a perceptible measure of self-support, Christians in all parts of India, divided though they were into little exclusive camps, united in a common endeavour of evangelism and brought into being the National Missionary Society of India. But for a small flaw in its constitution and policy, the N.M.S. is carrying on a wonderful piece of work in 11 centres. It is drawing to itself indigenous enterprises such as the work among the hill tribes of Assam started by Fr. Chakravarthi, and the Christu Kula Ashram of S. India. The flaw in its constitution is, that it is committed to perpetuate in its different centres, the denominational cleavages of the supporting congregations. In 1905, the N.M.S. was a bit timid and feared that it could have no chance of success if it set itself against denominational prejudices. But a body which started with an advisory committee composed of foreign missionaries and managed to shake off this vestige of the community's tutelage, may yet learn the courage and faith to break from the trammels of denominationalism. At any rate, it has succeeded in drawing together in a common enterprise all sections of Indian Christians—Lutherans, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Congregationalists. The Indian Christian who supports the N.M.S. does not ask to which field his contribution goes. This concession to the existing ecclesiastical situation should go if the N. M. S. is to enter into its own as a living and unifying force in the life of Indian Christianity. By the sacrifices it is calling forth and the new methods which it is forging for itself, it promises to be the most constructive and creative force within the Christian movement in India. Reference must be made

also to the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevely started about the same time. The Society's work has developed sufficiently to constitute part of an Anglican Diocese (Dornakal) and to call for the services of several workers from Tinnevely Diocese.

The third outgrowth of the new ferment was the awakening from an age-long slumber of the Syrian Church in South West India. Though the Syrian Church was the last to come into the current of new life, it bids fair to be the foremost in the field of service and most fruitful in the field of indigenous missionary experiment. With a college, a community centre, and with a number of ashrams, both of men and of women, which it has to its credit, in addition to the share it has in the work of the N. M. S., the Syrian Church is setting the pace for the Christian movement.

Equally promising, though not abundant, has been the flowering forth of the Christian spirit in poetry and literature. Nehemiah N. Goreh, a learned Sanskrit Pundit, who became a minister of the Gospel produced in his *Mirror of Hinduism* a penetratingly critical study of Hinduism. If his approach to Hinduism was polemical, the approach of the Christian writers of this generation, namely, Appasami, C. S. Paul, Chakkarai and Miss Paranjothi is the appreciative and adaptive one. A talented Tamil poet became a Christian and dedicated his talent to the service of Christ and has bequeathed to Tamil Christians a rich legacy of devotional poetry. A little later, another Tamil scholar became a Christian and he has left behind him, as his contribution to the life of the Tamil community, a remarkable work on the theme of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, as classical in diction as the Tamil *Ramayana* and loftier in ethical purity and richer in devotional fervour. But with the exception of eighty eight lyrics of the first and seven chants of the second, the vast wealth of their contribution remains unused by the Tamil Christian community. What Vedanayagam Sastriar, the Poet Laureate of the Mahratta king of Tanjore did to Tamil Christian poetry, Purushotham Choudary and Narayan Vaman Tilak did to Telugu and Maharatti Christian poetry. In the literary revival of India, Indian Christians like Michæl M. Dutt, Toru Dutt and Cornelia Sorabji have had an appreciable share. Rev. N. Gnanapragasam, an Anglican Minister of the South, produced a valuable Tamil translation of the New Testament.

In the field of social service also, Indian Christians of the present generation are making an effective contribution. The Servants of India Society, the pioneer in the field of service outside the Christian Missions, has an Indian Christian on its active membership. Today in the Village Industries Association and other uplift efforts of the Congress, there are a number of able Indian Christians whose services are very much valued by the Congress. To the women's movement in India, Indian Christians are making a larger contribution. Other examples are, what a single woman, who was once the Principal of a Christian College for women, and the Alwaye Settlement with its 400 acres of land placed at its disposal by the Hindu governments of Travancore and Cochin, are doing in the Punjab and Travancore respectively, for the uplift of the village communities. An outstanding example of the past was Pandita Ramabhai who pioneered in the work of rescuing the unfortunate widows of India with remarkable success.

Such is the movement which has been started in India indirectly by the impact of the West, both in its cultural and acquisitive expansion and directly by Christian Missions. We see in this vast and surging movement various elements. There are those in it which are definitely against Christianity. There are others which are not against us and therefore, according to the long view and broad sympathy of our Lord, are for us. There are, individuals outside these groups who, having lost their ancient moorings, have secretly anchored their souls in Christ—the other sheep of the Lord who are not yet within the fold. And there are those elements which are openly for Christ, as manifestations of a new life within the Christian community in India. The whole movement with the exception of the conservative movement in Hinduism, may well be described as the Christian movement in India as distinct from the Missionary enterprise, because the whole of it is permeated with the ethical standards, spiritual outlook, and even the technique of the evangelistic method of Christianity.

### HANDICAPS

#### IN HINDU REFORM MOVEMENTS

Impressive and hopeful though these movements are, they have not yet become a full and free tide of spiritual and truly

religious life, because they are cribbed and confined by certain serious handicaps. The Brahmo Samaj has become afraid of fearless thinking and vigorous protest against the imperfections of Hinduism. It was told that it had yielded too much to the spiritual attraction of Jesus Christ; and it has taught itself to believe that it could clothe the skeleton which it obtained from the Vedic religion in flesh taken from somewhere else. But it has not yet found where it can obtain the life and energy, form and beauty, if it does not go to Christ for them. The Brahmo Samaj today lives upon its past achievements and reputation and on the memory of its founders. As a Church it is a very anaemic replica of a Christian church. Its life is already ebbing out. Its end is perhaps a question of time. Where will the Brahmo be when that happens? He cannot certainly go back to Hinduism.

The Arya Samaj too is not in any happier position. Western scholars confidently assert that the only permanent and common features of the multitude of cults that are embraced in the polymorphous socio-religious development called Hinduism, are caste and the recognition of the authority of the Vedas. If that is true, then the Arya Samaj is only half Hindu because it repudiates caste. Dayananda Saraswathi's revolt began on the occasion of his all-night vigil before the image of Siva, when he realised that he had been fed on lies regarding its powers. Converts made by the Arya Samaj do not and cannot get into the Hindu caste system. Their position is worse than that of the out-castes who embrace Islam or Christianity. The Arya Samaj, therefore, is not Hindu as regards its position in the Hindu social system of caste. When one remembers that the lip loyalty to the Vedas which Hindu orthodoxy demanded of the sects which desired to be recognised as Hindu was so thin that even an atheistic philosophy could obtain the hall mark of orthodoxy, one will realise what value to attach to the Arya Samaj's loyalty to the Vedas. In view of this, it will not be far wrong to say that the Arya Samaj is no more Hindu than the Gnostic heresy of the West might have been. The Arya Samaj is a structure without a solid foundation. Its affiliation with Hinduism is determined by just that impalpable atmosphere of thought, emotion and attitude which Hinduism fostered, but no longer controls by means of its Vedic or Sastric commands and prohibitions in the field of social conduct and religious practice. That impalpable atmosphere is just a mass of



unorganised thought forms which enables the religious mind, according to the dominant mood of the moment, to leap back and forth between logical opposites such as absolutist monism and ethical theism, world negation and world affirmation, the Yoga of knowledge and the Yoga of action.

The greatest contribution that Ramakrishna Paramahansa made to the world was his doctrine of the harmony of all religions. His followers believe that this is the greatest truth that the world needs and that Ramakrishna demonstrated the soundness of this doctrine beyond all possibility of doubt not only by argument but by actual realisation in his own intense religious experience. Vivekananda did the same thing when he held forth the claim of the Vedanta to be the truly universal religion because one can be a good Hindu, Muslim or Christian and also a true Vedantin. The confusion of thought that underlies this position bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the Ramakrishna Mission too, like the Arya Samaj, is a structure without foundation. It is a thought movement caught suddenly in its course and petrified before it reached its logical goal.

It was fear that played this havoc upon the thought movement—fear for the reputation of India, fear that Hindu religion will dissolve in critical thinking leaving no residue. The fear assumed the garb of legitimate national pride and patriotism and was fortified in the thought that Christianity, the only serious rival to Hinduism, was nothing more than a socio-religious cult which sanctified, by creating a smoke screen of pious verbiage round them, flagrant social injustices, as for example between capital and labour within a nation, and unashamed conquest and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Unfortunately for Christianity, the strong nations were all Christian and the weak ones which they despoiled were all benighted heathen. The same reasons that turned Russia away from Christianity to Communism and which turns even today some of the finer minds in Europe and America to Socialism, operated in favour of the illogical conservatism within a reform movement like the Arya Samaj. It is clinging with the strength of desperation to an entirely untenable position in its effort to ward off the onslaught of Christianity and modern thought on Hinduism and stands afraid at the beginning of the road to religious truth. It relies on analogy and rhetoric rather than on the steady light of reason and tries to avoid the nasty corners with the aid of allegory. It goes

without saying that this is a painful position to be in; and that only an uncompromising and courageous search for truth in the realm of religion can bring poise and equilibrium to this thought movement in India. But the urgency of the need for such search is as great in the Christian West as it is in Hindu India. It is not resonable to hope that, when the former begins to make the search, the latter would be able to tackle the fear complex which is inhibiting the desire for reform and for religious truth?

### IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Now turning to the creative forces within the Christian community described in the previous section, almost the very first question that occurs to one is this—Why has there not been a more abundant growth of the indigenous spiritual movement within the Christian community? In answering this we must remember that, with the exception of the Syrian Christian community, the Indian Christian community is very young and has taken time to grow into a homogeneous group even within each linguistic area, and that the majority of its membership was drawn from the educationally and socially unprivileged ranks of Hindu society. The gifts and the graces of the Spirit are not things that can be made to order, but are as unpredictable as the wind that bloweth where it listeth. Any eager haste in forcing manifestations of spirituality is bound to create counterfeits and engender hypocrisy. However eager one may be to see the coming into fruition of the secretly ascending sap in foliage and flower, one must bide God's time. In this respect, Sadhu Sunder Singh showed remarkable spiritual penetration when he declined the offer of a wealthy South Indian Christian who proposed to endow an institution for training Sadhus if he would be its head.

Even after making allowance for these facts, one should still feel less than satisfied with the volume of creative indigenous Christian enterprise. The paucity of initiative and enterprise can be traced ultimately to what Dr. Stanley Jones in biting sarcasm called the 'Mission Compound Mentality'. The growth of the Mission Compound was almost inevitable, because of the serious danger to which the persecuting zeal of the Hindus exposed the new converts to Christianity; but the 'mentality' was certainly a preventible disease. There is an interesting anecdote told of an interview between Vedanaya-

ga Sastriar, the great Tamil poet and one Rev. Mr. Webb who was engaged in compiling a book of lyrics for the Tamil Christian community. There seems to have been a discussion on the diction and literary form of the songs of the poet, which, to Mr. Webb's mind, appeared objectionable. Finally Mr. Webb had his way. The poet had to content himself with expressing his dissatisfaction in a pun. Such prejudice extended to the use of Indian musical instruments in Christian worship. This story is by no means ancient. The wrong mentality thus created persists even today in the preference which Indian Christians have for translated hymns which are bad poetry, and which are sung in an unmusical jargon. Who could have dreamt in those days or dream to-day of bringing into the worship of an Indian congregation such things as flowers, pictures and rituals unless and until the missionary overcame his natural prejudice and saw their value? It is no wonder then that today people are able to say that, in the adaptation of Indian forms to Christian worship, missionaries have shown greater enthusiasm and initiative. What happened in the realm of poetry happened also in regard to literature. A pure work of Christian art such as *Thembavani* by Fr. Beschie, would not have seen the light of day if it had been submitted to a committee of the Christian Literature Society. This society could not undertake the expense of publishing any such work, when all its resources had to be spent in the production of tracts and books of a polemical or evangelistic value. The Christian community, small on the whole and smaller when divided into linguistic groups, could not encourage Christian literature in any of the Indian languages, by offering a wide enough field for circulation. Many of Vedanayaga Sastriar's works still remain in manuscript. When a promising poet or writer is taken and put through a theological seminary, the poet in him is dead by the time he becomes a good evangelist or pastor. To what extent valuable talent had been thus nipped in the bud, must remain a matter of conjecture. But there can be no doubt that under the pressing need of Missions for an army of trained workers, trained in Western ideas of religious training, Indian initiative did not have a decent chance.

The resources in men and money are frittered away in bolstering up Western denominational churches and in perpetuating with solemnity an entirely artificial loyalty to these distinctions which in the vast majority of unsophisticated laymen are but skin deep. It has been pointed out how the

National Missionary Society has been compelled to make an awkward compromise in regard to this factor. But the extent of the harm and wastage done to the spiritual strength and economic self-sufficiency of Indian churches cannot be measured unless one looks at the life of Christian communities in our large cities. While the community in a city could maintain in decent condition, with a well-educated and adequately paid ministry, seven churches and also take care of its widows and orphans, and carry on some independent piece of evangelistic work or support a few rural congregations, it is called upon to maintain twenty two churches, living on the margin of self-support, unable to pay for a decent ministry, looking helplessly on at the misery of its widows and orphans, unable to seize opportunities for service. All this frustration is encouraged simply and solely for the glory of denominationalism, but not for the maintenance of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Should Indian Christianity desire to attempt something of its own in the way of a new denomination, just for a change, it will find the field already choked with foreign ones. The pity of it! oh, the pity of it! exclaims the thinking Christian. His only alternative is to break away from the existing organisations and found an Indian Church. But looking at past history, he sees in Dr. Palani Andi's movement in Madras which died with him, and another in Mysore, which broke up and whose surviving section entered the S. I. U. C., and in a recent movement, again in Madras, and its grave irregularities a warning finger. He remains within the existing organisation, waiting like a chicken for a helpful peck or two from the hen on the shell which it is not able to break with its own tiny beak. His appreciation of order and regularity prevents him from seeking release in such fads as Pentecostalism and Seventh Day Adventism. Happy are those who have thus changed their shackles, for they have at least the exhilaration of a change!

All denominational churches are bisected by another social factor. In our large cities, there are 'English' congregations composed of Anglo-Indians and Europeans and a sprinkling of Indian Christians. This division is necessary because of the language difficulty and is valuable as preserving for the European in a foreign land his language and music and accustomed forms of worship. But there could and ought to be a far closer co-operation between these and the Indian churches. In many cases the English congregations are not even interested spect-

ators of the struggles of the Indian congregations. The European missionary is as a rule a regular member of these congregations and sits on their committees. But the European officials and businessmen still stand aloof. A fuller demonstration of common loyalty that unites or ought to unite the European and the Indian Christian, would be a convincing witness to the doubting Hindu of the fact that in Christ there is neither East nor West, neither white nor coloured. This fact brings to light another of the weaknesses of Christianity in the home base, where it has failed to break through national, racial and class barriers and achieve in the day to day transactions of life the brotherhood of man.

Finally, the Indian Christian community failed to utilise to the fullest extent the added stimulus of Indian nationalism for the quickening of its own life. By its suspicion of and indifference to the national struggle, it proved itself an unhelpful neighbour to the Hindu and the Moslem. The founding of the N. M. S. in 1905 synchronised with the violent national stirring which followed the partition of Bengal. The new-born national consciousness was no doubt the immediate exciting cause of the national evangelistic enterprise. It caused a mild and pleasant surprise in many Hindus who were glad to see this feeble stirring of nationalism within the soul of the Indian Christian. Since then a few Christian Indians have exhibited a keener interest in and a warmer sympathy with the national movement. By opposing the scheme of communal electorate,—though in doing so theirs as a minority community, was renouncing the protection of the scheme,—they showed that the enlightened Christian conscience could take a more dispassionate view of things and help people to keep their head amidst the perplexities of communal rivalries. But the promise of this nascent nationalism has been inhibited.

Add to the natural mental inertia and caution, which refuses to take risks and court trouble, and to the understandable suspicion of the intentions of the majority communities, the silent influence of the missionary body, and you get a powerful inhibitory force. On all major issues on which there was difference of opinion between the Government and national leaders, and even on questions involving purely moral standards, the sympathies of the British and the American missionaries have been usually with the Government. A community which was brought into being by the disinterested labours of missionaries,

and which is being so generously supported by them, cannot but look upon them as its natural friends, protectors and guides. A great majority of educated Indian Christians are employed in mission institutions as teachers, doctors etc. Their political thinking, such as there is, takes its pattern and colour from the thought of the missionaries. The community sometimes commits the fatal blunder of stirring itself at the end of a national crisis to fight for crumbs, for the privileges which the sufferings of others had won for the country. It is no wonder then that the Hindu nationalist looks upon this community with extreme suspicion, not unmixed with contempt, and finds it impossible to contemplate with equanimity the progress of Christianity which would only mean a numerical increase of this de-nationalised community. Every convert to Christianity from Hinduism, from the Hindu point of view, is one vote lost and the strength of one man added to the pull against nationalism.

### PROBLEMS

The conservative movement in Hinduism with which not even liberal Hindus are in sympathy has a problem of its own, in the solution of which Christianity cannot give any active assistance. No one can prophesy how long the conservative movement will be able to resist the forces of progress. The reform movement within Hinduism stands to gain by a wise application to it of the liberalising forces of Islam, Christianity, and the best elements of modern culture. Leaders of the Arya Samaj, for example, shall have to settle their differences with the upholders of Varnashrama Dharma, and attempt jointly to find out what is essential Hinduism and what are its unhelpful accretions. Such a task has not yet been seriously undertaken by either section. When one remembers how much time, thought and scholarship have been spent on a critical study of the Christian scriptures, and that in spite of certain hasty conclusions which needed revision in the light of fresh historical material, Christianity is all the better and stronger for having been subjected to such criticism, one cannot but wish that a similar service should be rendered to Hinduism also. Hindus do not want to accept the services of Western scholars. Missionary effort in this direction, though not lacking in scholarship, has not been unaffected by the missionary purpose. The need for a critical study of Hindu Scriptures for themselves still remains unfilled. Even though it may be almost impossible for a Chri-

stian to purge his mind of all Christian beliefs and convictions in approaching the Hindu Scriptures, it may be very useful to find out what a close study of them reveals to his mind of their essential teaching. For instance, what comments would a Christian be able to make if he studied the Upanishads, without attempting to compare its teachings with Christian theology? Would he adjudge Sankara or Ramanuja as the more truthful interpreter of the central teaching of the Upanishads?

Apart from such help, the Christian enterprise should definitely attempt to foster in India a clear historic sense and the willingness to undertake a wholly disinterested search for truth in the field of religion. Reverence for a great and ancient religion like Hinduism is unquestionably right, but there should be greater reverence for truth, not only for the sake of truth but for the sake of Hinduism itself. There is no other way in which the reform movements within Hinduism may find a firmer foundation. Without it the fate which overtook the spiritual movement behind the Upanishads will befall this hopeful movement also. For this is what Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says about the Upanishads:—"While the hour demanded fidelity to the spiritual ideal, we find in the Upanishads a good deal of temporising. They began as a movement towards the liberation of the individual from the shackles of external authority and excessive conventionalism. They ended by riveting the old chains. Instead of establishing new values for life, they tended to propagate the traditional ones".

The Indian Christian has better chances than a missionary of securing a patient hearing from the Hindu when he speaks his mind regarding Hinduism. But it is only on one condition that the Hindu would give him his ears. "Is the Christian a good Indian? Then we will give him the right to criticise us," say the nationalist Hindus. They want to be assured that you love them well enough to sympathise with them in their national aspirations, before they would let you speak in criticism of their national culture. Only love gives one the right to admonish.

The problems which confront the creative forces within Indian Christianity are more numerous and more difficult of solution. But there is this difference. There is an unrelenting search for a solution, and notable advance in the direction of creating the conditions of a freer and fuller life for the Chris-

tians of India, has already been made. Old prejudices, accustomed ways of worship, established institutions, struggle for the crumbs of office, pride of position and caste, still act as clogs in the wheel of progress. Nothing less than a consuming and purifying fire of the Holy Spirit would appear adequate to bring release. However, it is well worth stating these problems in order that we may think seriously and pray intelligently.

The Christian community outside the Syrian church has depended far too long on Western financial support. It must set out in search of the quickest way to self-support. As regards forms of worship and church organisation, it is but a clumsy imitator of the West. It has no theology, not even an indigenous heresy, to show that serious thoughts relating to the deep mysteries of the Christian faith are simmering in its mind. In a country famous for the solidarity of its social groups and its effect upon the life of the individual for better or worse, the Christian community alone remains very loosely knit. The local church does not call forth any warm loyalty and enthusiastic devotion from every Christian in the place, most of whom think that they have done their duty by it when they have paid a small contribution. The local church on its part has not troubled itself so far to find out what could be done to make it a real spiritual home to all its members and evoke in them a sense of pride and possession. Apart from offering a very diluted sort of fellowship in worship, its activities do not seem to touch the personal problems of its members, their economic no less than their moral and spiritual. It does not have a programme of work which by its greatness and spirituality could draw out the heroic in every soul. Again and again people turn from the insipidity of organised church life to such fire-eating and hair raising stunts as the search for the gift of tongues and the eagerness to see the signs of the coming of the Lord which makes one feel exultant rather than deeply depressed by wars and rumours of wars. Above all it needs unity and concord in the midst of diversity; not an outward unity of ecclesiastical organisation, but the inward unity cemented by one great loyalty, one aspiration, one great purpose, one undying hope. If in the search for this new way of life the community's efforts should escape the danger of being drawn mechanically into the well worn paths which the older churches are treading, the Indian Christian



should be permitted to make the search all by himself. The well-worn paths should be hidden from his view. For if these were within any measurable distance, the community would simply plunge into them, hastily relinquishing the sacred right and solemn duty of experimentation. And finally it has to discover how best it can make its distinctive contribution to the life of the nation.

In the clash of communal jealousies, amidst the exacting claims of temporary national programmes and policies, in the conflict between the privileged and the unprivileged classes in the land and in the unsettlement created by the sweeping tide of materialism and irreligion, the country stands in urgent need of calm judgment and a definite spiritual lead. Who can give these to India except those whose minds are disciplined in the teachings of Jesus and whose hearts are inspired by a glowing vision of His Kingdom?

#### CERTAIN GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The careful reader would have noticed that till now the name Indian Church has not been used, but instead the clumsy alternative Indian Christian community. This was done deliberately, in order not to encourage the pleasant delusion that there is an Indian Church. We have churches. But we have yet to see an Indian Church, rather the Indian Church which is at once the hope and despair of those who long for the operation of the living presence of the Lord in the hearts, minds and souls of his Indian devotees to take shape in an organisation which will be truly Indian—in a Church which will enshrine and visibly symbolise the transcendent Spirit of the Son of Man in the rich legacy of the Indian religious consciousness. Those who long for this daybreak in India are convinced that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and no other God has been and is working in the hearts of those who, counting everything as loss, in order to win the peace of God, had blossomed into great and humble souls glowing with a love unsurpassed in the religious experience of the race. To pick holes in their theology to which these men give their intellectual assent and then proceed to say that their religious experience cannot be genuine and God-inspired, is to miss the point. These souls are better than their theologies. After all who would believe that theology or philosophy was ever the

gateway to religious experience, or its adequate expression in language? You may call that sense of being exiled from God sin or rebellion, or ignorance; the longing to be restored to Him, forgiveness, reconciliation or enlightenment; and the assurance that you have been taken back, almost in spite of yourself, justification, redemption, moksha or oneness with God. The experience is primary and fundamental. Its explanation in theological or philosophical categories is altogether secondary and accidental. Looking at the experience, it would be presumptuous to suggest that outside Christianity there can be no sense of sin, nor true penitence and joy of release. It may be argued that such experience cannot be dissociated from the theology in which a soul is nurtured. But in India at any rate there are at present no clear cut theological boundaries. Hindu theology has not been slow to assimilate whatever of value in the religious atmosphere that has changed since the advent of Islam and Christianity into India.

The Indian Church will be a city without foundations, whose maker and builder is God. For the true Church everywhere during the last twenty centuries has come into being only in this way. It descended from heaven with the coming of the Son of Man, who gathered up within himself the divine urge in every soul that had gone before him. It descended upon the disciples who were gathered in the upper room in prayer, because in them was summed up the spiritual tension created by the eruptive force of the Gospel of resurrection pulling Judaism up by its roots. It burst into being when Greek and Roman paganism whose foundations were shaken by Christianity, recoiled upon it in persecution. It blossomed in the soul of a Francis or a Loyola, who represented in himself the spiritual hunger of his generation. It arose in militant revolt against religious chicanery in the soul of Luther and of John Knox. But in between, what remained of Christianity was just the empty shell. The spirit dwelt in a small remnant which had not bent its knees before the Baal of institutionalism.

From this point of view, we must say that there is no Church in India. In fact there is no Church anywhere in the world. While the time is ripe for a cataclysmic upheaval of real Christianity, the churches in the East and the West are unaware of their prophetic mission. The reason is not far to seek.

The Church was wholly unprepared for the sudden and phenomenal expansion of men's thoughts and ambitions which came with the progress of exploration and scientific invention. When Mammon stood beckoning to Europe, and she, seeing his yellow glittering face, forgot that Mammon was always the Mammon of unrighteousness, and that she could not serve him and God at the same time, the Church did not dream that there could be any real antagonism between commerce, and Christianity. Instead of Christianising commerce, she allowed Christianity to be commercialised. Succumbing to the wiles of the world spirit, the Church lost her enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God. The march of industrialism and the colonial expansion of Europe have left with us unsolved problems. Europe, and now Asia, are trying to tackle them by the wicked arbitrament of war or by devious diplomacy. Commercial rivalries and tariff barriers have accentuated the differences and engendered a militant narrow nationalism. This has invaded and overrun the churches everywhere. Therefore, their voice trails off into a feeble and uncertain whisper, when they attempt to deliver the prophetic message. In fact they do not seem to have any clear and convincing message for the world.

Fortunately for Indian Christianity, the danger from nationalism is not very great, because Indian nationalism is very modest. It has no imperialistic ambitions. Nor can Christianity in India align itself with vested interests, because the community is almost the poorest in the poorest country in the world. So one desires that while yet the air is fresh and pure the infant Indian Church should be born. How? No prophet can say. But we can all see that it cannot be brought into being by transplanting on the Indian soil Western churches. It cannot be built upon outworn creeds, borrowed theology, alien ceremonies, sacerdotalism and priesthood. It cannot even be clothed properly in a garment made of pieces of cloth torn from the habiliments of half a dozen Protestant denominations. When it comes into being, it will have a seamless robe of its own. You may build a church in India on the Lambeth Quadrilateral. What will thus be built will be a church; but it should not be forgotten that it may be perfectly empty. You may have the walls and the roof; but the Lord may not be there. What Christian Indians want is that they should get at the Lord. When they have found Him, and when He has found them, then He himself will build His Church in India.

Christian Indians have not yet been called to pay the price of this vivifying discovery. To be a Christian in India to-day is a perfectly comfortable thing. His place of worship has been built for him. His pastor's salary is paid for him. His theology is offered as a free gift to him; and he can choose one from a wide variety. He can be baptised, married and buried with formularies to which he had given no thought. This soul-killing state of comfort must go. Instead, there must come the strain and stress of economic struggle and brain racking intellectual and administrative problems connected with his church life. He must face some kind of persecution, even though it be a mild social ostracism and obloquy, which would force him to think whether or not he should prefer personal security to the riches of knowing Christ.

When he is thus driven to the Lord, he would get a glimpse of His irresistible love. Then he would set about seeking strength and reinforcement for his faith in a fellowship of believers. In this search, he will naturally turn to the fellowships formed in the fire of persecution, and to the New Testament. There he will find a triangle, not a quadrilateral as the apostolic foundation of the Church. Having been taught to regard with respect things apostolic, he would fasten his mind on this triangle whose three corners are one faith, one Lord, and one baptism. Looking at it, he will find that the three cornered unity stands like a spinning top on its apex and converges into a single point. The one faith merges into the one Lord. For a faith without the Lord is impossible; and the Lord without faith is remote and useless. As for baptism, he would wonder whether St. Paul meant the external ceremony or the baptism of the spirit. At any rate baptism, without the Lord and without faith in Him, is meaningless. It cannot be a self-dependent entity. He would realise that what he wants is the Lord; what the fellowship of believers needs is the Lord. Therefore the one and only foundation of the Church is the Lord.

That does not mean that there will be no creed, no sacrament, no priesthood, no polity. But those will be made and broken and made again. They will not be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Only the Lord can be that. These little systems, which have their day, and cease to be, will be regarded as, but the broken lights of the Lord who is more than they.

At this point a voice will whisper at his right that he cannot begin in a vacuum; and another at his left that he would be very ill-advised to spurn the rich heritage of centuries of Christianity. But the trouble is not that there is any danger of the Indian Church being born in a vacuum and struggling for breath. The trouble is how to create sufficient vacuum to draw it out, to create some little space for it in a place which is choked with a vast and imposing mass of ancient and modern Christian heritage. In fact when the time is ripe for an experiment of this kind, one fears that there would be as much opposition from Christian Indians who have long been indoctrinated with the theologies of the West as from any other group. Even if foreign friends of the Indian Church-to-be are persuaded to take their hands off, revolutionary Indian thought will have a tough fight with Western religious thought and practice which the foreign friends have nurtured with assiduous care on the Indian soil. But the odds will be even, if these foreign importations are deprived of the powerful aid of missionary prestige and financial support. To create a perfect vacuum is a psychological impossibility.

As for the heritage, the Christian Indian accepts the principle, the more the merrier. And so he says that he would take not only the Christian heritage, but also the Hindu heritage into his purview. He wants a bigger garden containing all sorts of flowers from which to vary the material tokens of his worship when he approaches the lotus feet of the Lord every morning. He should be pardoned if occasionally he shows a partiality for Indian flowers which to him appear to possess richer colour and stronger fragrance. If the O. T. represents the cradle and the swaddling clothes of Jesus, the Upanishads prove the cosmic claim which St. John the Divine makes for the Lord in those striking words which introduce his story of the Incarnation. Christ is indeed the real light that enlightens every man. There is no real barrier between the two movements. To argue that the O. T. forms an integral part of Christianity which asserts itself as a record of God's self-disclosing and recreating revelation in Jesus, appears somewhat artificial and strained. God spoke to Adam, even to the fratricide Cain, to Noah, to Enoch and to Melchizedech, long before He called Abraham. If Judaism began with Abraham—because, when you begin to dissect God's dealings with the race into 'isms', where you

draw your line is a matter of opinion—then Judaism itself according to this view gathered in much that was not part of the religion of revelation, but the 'the confused disharmonious result of man's effort to apprehend the totality of existence.'

But there is a deeper reason. To us the Lord alone matters. He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end of all our spiritual strivings, the hope in our helplessness, and the only object that can claim and worthily accept our full surrender. Everything else is only relative. And as the mood prompts, we may use a liturgy of the West or a devotional chant of the East. We may worship between plain white washed walls or in a great fane bright with pictures and flowers and fragrant with incense. But we may after all find the richest blessings and the most intimate communion with the Lord in solitude and silence.

Then again we are not prepared to accept the traditions of the West, without first assessing their value to Christendom, and the world as a whole, and to Indian Christianity in particular. From the point of view of credal statement, we feel that the last word has not yet been spoken, and in fact will never be spoken. We feel that a restatement is possible, not only in the vocabulary of the East intelligible to the East, but in the light of the background of Eastern religious thought. This is necessary for the Indian Church and may prove generally useful to the other churches also. There is a witness of the oriental consciousness to Jesus Christ which also must have an opportunity to speak. What harm can there be in calling for silence in order that the small infant voice of Indian Christian theology may be heard? Negatively, we find that there is in the historic tradition of the older churches much that is puerile, much that has deflected thought, enthusiasm and energy from the core of the faith and the lofty dream of the Kingdom of God. We deplore the divisions of the West. We deplore even more deeply their repetition and perpetuation in India. We see that the pure spirit that issued from the Gospels and the Epistles has been clouded with pagan philosophy and thrown into a tortuous course by the rivalries of the churches and the political vicissitudes of Europe. Where the Lord and St. Paul met the contentious spirit and its penchant for quarrels over theories, by pointing it to the facts of the spirit, traditional Christianity has wasted enormous amount of time and thought in the effort to weigh

in delicate balances the shadow of a difference between two rival theories. Is it right or wrong to pay tribute to Caesar? Christ took that occasion to remind the questioner that he has something to render unto God. Was it his own sin or the sin of his parents that made the man born blind what he was? No answer, but a demonstration of the glory of God shining through eyes to which sight was restored. To St. Paul what comes is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision. It is the new creation. This sturdy commonsense and realism has been sadly lacking in traditional Christianity. We dread the possibility of this story being repeated in India, where hairsplitting has been developed into a fine art. Should this happen, our people will get wrapped in the effluvia of their weary brains and lose sight of the realities of Christ and His Kingdom.

And finally we consider that elements of value in the Christian tradition are matters of luxury for which we may dig and delve when we have the leisure. Our immediate task is to discover the message of Jesus to us and to our land in this our day and generation, and then organise all our resources for the effective presentation of this message through the spoken word and active service. We feel that the same is the task before the churches of the West; and would like to advise them to leave cultural traditions alone and turn to the practical task of standing up for Christ's ideals for humanity which are so wantonly being trampled under the feet of rampant nationalism. If the Church is to save its own soul, not to speak of saving the world, it must unite and put down the conflagration. That is why there is indignant impatience at the wedges which keep Indian Christianity divided.

These thoughts are not the result of anti-theological or anti-ecclesiastical prejudices, with which we are credited. We are anti-theological not because we have unconsciously fallen under the spell of the relativistic attitude to truth which is said to characterise Hindu theology. We were hardly aware that this was the prevailing attitude of the Indian mind until we were told recently that this was so. For while we knew the position of the Vedanta, we also knew the robust world affirmation of qualified monism. While we knew that the Hindus spoke sometimes of the greatness of Sankara as a philosopher, it was the gospel of militant action, viz., the Bhagavad Gita, that they read at their daily devotions. To

take the misreading of the Upanishads by a single man, born several centuries after those were composed, however influential his school of philosophy might have been, and to say that that is the prevailing thought in all Hinduism is to fly in the face of facts. Why ignore the fact that the philosophy of Ramanuja and of Madhwa, and that independent system of thought known as Saiva Siddhanta, are all opposed to absolute monism. Our anti-theological prejudice, if any, is due to our relativistic view, not of truth but of theology, whether Christian or non-Christian.

Similarly our anti-ecclesiastical bias cannot be dismissed with the facile assumption that it is born of snobbery, of a reluctance on the part of the richer and more educated section of Indian Christians to identify themselves with the poorer members of the community. Again the causes lie deeper. Ecclesiastical orders that govern the Indian congregations are excellent as far as they go. Some Indian Christians are experts in such things as the Methodist Constitution, and can wax eloquent on the sanctity of episcopal ordination and the Lutheran conception of the Eucharist. But it is not through such skill that people can infuse life into the Indian church. These are not the prophets who could bring it into being. As Judaism persecuted its prophets, Indian Christianity as organised now, gives the prophet the cold shoulder. The vast army of our clergymen, good, bad and indifferent alike, have a place in church polity. But dependent as they are on the contributions of their parishoners, and burdened as they are with family responsibilities, they cannot afford to play the prophetic role even within their own churches. We have to look elsewhere for the gift of prophecy. Our observation of the Hindu religious orders in which there is the wandering ascetic in addition to the temple priest, leads us to the view that the priest and the prophet cannot be rolled into one. This view is confirmed by the fact that in Judaism the prophetic function was distinct from the priestly, and often at variance with it. Moreover, organisations do tend to usurp the place of the living spirit, and sometimes crush it. The manipulation and control of mammoth ecclesiastical machinery may suit the temperament of others. But the Indian temperament has been known to break under it. Finally, we have no use for organisations which divide us, where they should unite, which hide from us and our countrymen the unadorned glory of Christ.



### THE CHURCH

It is pointed out that an adequate conception of the Church as a 'fellowship rooted in God and His divine redemptive purpose and committed to the service of the world' should precede all attempts to think out its relation to the world. This suggestion deserves to be stressed and underlined. But as the divided churches in the West seek more and more earnestly to unite, certain deplorable tendencies have begun to manifest themselves. Sects that were innocent of sacerdotalism, seem to be captivated by glowing conceptions of the Church which do not take into account the hard realities that stare Christendom in the face. It is claimed that the Church is the extension and effectuation of the Incarnation. It is the bearer of salvation, not Christ alone. Because St. Paul could not have referred to the limited person of the historical Jesus but to the community of the faithful of which Christ is the Head, it is in the Church that God is reconciling the world unto Himself. To be in Christ and to be in the Church are concepts which are absolutely inter-changeable. This is the kind of view that is exercising the thought and swelling the heart of Anglo-Catholicism, and those other Protestant denominations which are making friendly overtures to it. The effort to out-Rome Rome in an effort to build up unity on ecclesiastical notions may bring neither the favour of Rome nor real œcumenical unity to these churches. If in the service of this movement, a Protestant theologian could be tempted to twist St. Paul's able summary of his view of the incarnation and make it yield a conception of the Church which reads almost sacrilegious, the movement needs to be watched very carefully.

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

It may be a corrective to this tendency, to turn to the more practical conception of the Kingdom of God. In the fullness of time God sent His Son to inaugurate it. It is already a present and potent reality in the hearts of the poor in spirit, the meek, the peace-makers and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Yet it is one that will descend like an avalanche upon the world, wiping it out and producing a new heaven and a new earth. It is a divine event; yet it can suffer violence and those who have the will can seize it by violence. It is in eternity; yet in time. But that part of it

which it is edifying to contemplate is the present, in which men are privileged to have almost a determining part to play. The transcendent aspect of the Kingdom has to be kept in mind so that we may learn to be humble and look to God for grace and power to accomplish our share, and set about the task with the confidence that it is God working for the establishment of His Kingdom, God who cannot suffer defeat. But the awful fact that we, by our disobedience, may delay the coming of the Kingdom and make it more costly than it need be in love, labour and sacrifice for Him and His children, should only drive home to our minds the heavy responsibility which it has pleased God to place upon our feeble shoulders by this un-understandable scheme of His.

Eternity operating within time, instead of making the temporal process of no consequence, imparts to it tremendous value. What we can achieve through the grace of God, far from being immaterial, is very very relevant and necessary for the bursting in upon the present world order of the Kingdom of God. To say that it can never be the direct object of our labours, and that our business is just to be obedient servants of God, rejecting, as a temptation the desire to assess the value of our obedience, is to shift thought into the realm of Maya and make the Kingdom of God a part of the grand illusion of Sankara's monism. It is to forget the fact that Jesus said that He has called us friends. Between friends there must be loyalty based on understanding.

From the standpoint of the Kingdom of God, we can look back with profit upon the church. The Church, even if it be perfect, can never be co-extensive with the Kingdom. At best it can be the most effective organised agency working for it. And if it be truly the body of Christ, responsive to every thought and impulse coming from the Head, it can be a miniature Kingdom. God who prepared the world for ages before He sent His Son, is preparing the world this day also in the Church, through the Church and out in the wider world. Civilisation itself, in a rapidly shrinking world, is preparing the way for the Kingdom. Its sudden shrinkage has caused and is causing violent collisions. But the violence of the collisions itself seems to open the eyes of the world to the truth that only the meek can inherit the earth. Unable to understand this paradox, the world tries to escape; but the truth pursues it with the doggedness of the hound of heaven.

The Church has a twofold task. It has to watch the movements and tendencies within itself to see that it grows more and more into the fullness of the form and beauty of the Kingdom. And it has to hold before the world as a pattern its own endeavours to redeem and sanctify all human relationships by the law of love. It has to challenge the world to find for itself, if haply it may, the joy and peace that reign within its own borders. If the world can find it outside the Church, the Church will not gibe.

Whether the world can find it outside Christ need not be debated. Because if Christ is in very truth the light that lights every man that comes into the world, He, in His own good time, will make recognition dawn upon the world also. As the blind man who was restored to sight did not know who his benefactor was until Jesus Himself told him, the world may be ignorant for a while, but will pay its homage to Him to whom it properly belongs when recognition dawns. Only the sectarian pride which tempts us to be more Christian than Christ Himself will quarrel with the patience and benevolence of the Lord which extend even to those who do not call Him Lord, but none the less do His will.

In the light of this tremendous task, all missionary motive and plan need rethinking. This is a problem that cannot be dealt with within the compass of this essay. But just one remark needs to be made at this place. The attempt to compare Christianity with the other religions of the world, in the hope of finding the ground for establishing the urgency of the need to publish the Christian message, is doomed to failure. It leads to the view that unless there was convincing proof of the uniqueness of Christianity, the missionary enterprise will have no legs to stand on. It leads the missionary apologist to put the utmost strain on his critical faculty and go about with a huge magnifying glass to discover subtle differences between similar religious experiences and similar theological notions. This method only accentuates acerbity and stiffens opposition to the Gospel. We stand on the immovable rock of Christ. We may rest assured that He has no peer. If we have eyes to see, we shall recognise with penitence and humility that in spite of our utter and miserable failure to hold Him up before the world, He is winning His way into the hearts of men. Our task is only to tell the good news which He brought to His brethren. And our telling has to be supported by our living. People

know Christ and see in His way of life the only ray of hope. But they are discouraged and even dissuaded from following this ray by us who only play with the idea of the Kingdom of God. If the Church can, in one small corner of the world, build the Kingdom or rather build itself on the pattern of the Kingdom of God, the world will be only too glad to follow the lead. A Church which has honestly set itself to seek the Kingdom for itself can immediately and without waiting to achieve any conspicuous success, call the world to a similar endeavour. Such a Church would have demonstrated to the world that it honestly believes what it preaches; and that honesty will become contagious, for, after all, is not the greatest obstacle to the propagation of the Gospel the suspicion that the churches which preach it do not themselves believe it?

One other remark before we leave this subject. The time is long gone by when people were interested exclusively in personal salvation. The ethnic religion of Judaism placed the destiny of Israel in the divine scheme of things before personal salvation. Christ did not look upon personal salvation as other than an incident in the establishment of the Kingdom of God, in the creation of a re-born humanity. Pagan outlook and pagan philosophy have long suppressed this cardinal feature of the message which the Lord has brought to the world; and nationalism with its narrow geographical walls has made the picture of the world-wide Empire of God so long unthinkable.

It is readily recognised by missionary observers of the Christian movement in the East, that it is likely to be seriously hampered by the tendency on the part of Eastern Christians to be good Hindus, Japanese or Chinese first and then Christians. But is not the trouble with the world and the Church entirely due to the fact that in the West it is not a tendency, but an established fact that people are good Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans or Italians first and only then Christians? Blood has proved itself thicker than Christianity. Only when the Church sees the glory of the Kingdom of God and its exclusive claim upon its loyalty and then proceeds implacably to wage war against narrow nationalisms, commercial rivalries, racial injustices and stands up to face fiery persecution from the omnipotent States of the modern world, the Church will deserve its name. It must accept this as its divine destiny.

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The above rough survey of the Christian movement in India and a sketchy statement of certain general principles that emerged from the survey have prepared the ground for facing the special problems which confront the missionary enterprise. We shall not touch upon the problem of missionary approach to Hinduism. Certain hints have been thrown out in the two previous sections with regard to a method of approach. These must suffice. The one which shall be considered in some detail is the problem of missionary agencies and their relation to Indian congregations.

It will be valuable to keep in mind two classes of Indian Christian congregations. There are those which are educationally and economically advanced and there are those which remain almost on the level of the most backward Indian classes. In dealing with these two classes we cannot proceed on the dictum that what is sauce for the goose can be sauce for the gander. The need for maintaining this distinction will become apparent as we proceed.

*Rural Communities* :—Looking at the needs and possibilities of rural communities, we should concede at once that the attitude of missions cannot but be one of continued support, protection and guidance. Owing to questionings in the minds of missionaries and supporting organisations and to the persistent attack made by nationalist Hindus against 'proselytism', village communities stand in danger of losing the support that they need. It is pointed out that Christian Missions are gathering in people from among the neediest class of the Indian population by offering prospects of material advancement. A lurking doubt has entered the mind of many missionaries whether this charge may not after all be true. But it is difficult to say where service for service sake for the one of neediest of the least of these the Lord's brethren ends and material inducement for conversion begins. Even if the missionary did not say to the prospective convert that he would gain an improvement in his social status and that his children would have better facilities for education, he cannot hide from them the fact that those like them who had become Christians possess these benefits. The burden of making such attractions inoperative in the minds of these disinherited people of India, falls upon the Hindus.

The missionary cannot but welcome such efforts as the throwing open of temples and organised schemes of Harijan uplift. He will not regret if as a result of this manifestation of genuine concern for, and open recognition of the equality of status of the Harijan within the Hindu social system, the movement of Harijans towards Christianity is retarded.

In this connection the recent phenomenon of mass movement which, starting with the depressed classes has begun to affect higher classes in certain parts of India, needs reflecting upon, as also the fact that some of the Harijan leaders are still not satisfied with what their caste Hindu brethren have done and promise to do for them, and feel that they cannot trust the future of their community into the latter's hands. This should make the caste Hindu pause and think. He has to ask himself if he has yet touched the root of the problem even with the revolutionary programme of temple entry. The lesson for the Christian missionary is clear. After all the movement towards Christianity is not something that he can control with or without material inducements. It is truly a mysterious movement of the spirit of the Lord, which defies man's wisest planning! The missionary is called upon to do very little more than reap where the Lord Himself has prepared the harvest.

The question why more of the upper classes of Hinduism are not embracing Christianity need not detain the missionary. His business is to extend the invitation to all and receive such as are willing to accept it. If Jesus had waited for half a dozen prominent Pharisees and one or two members of the Sanhedrim to follow Him before He invited some fishermen of Galilee, perhaps He might not have achieved as much as He did during His all too brief earthly ministry. Anyhow the duty to receive those who are willing to come is perfectly plain. Equally plain is the duty to render to every one of those who are accepted into the fellowship of the Church, all reasonable facilities for a full development of personality. To people so unfortunate as the outcastes of India, a little material comfort is an absolute necessity for the release of their souls from an age-long social tyranny. When Christian Missions render this service to their needy converts, it cannot be argued that they are offering material inducements to future converts. The only other alternative is for the missionary to close up the springs of fellow-feeling and sympathy and tamely acquiesce in a situation which the enlightened Hindus themselves regard as intolerable.

*The Urban Communities* :—Economically and educationally advanced sections of the Indian Christian community are to be found in our large cities and towns. In the smaller towns the larger number of a Christian congregation are people employed in mission schools or hospitals. They form practically the backbone of the local church. Others independent of missions are prevented from showing equal enthusiasm in the affairs of the Church for either or all of these reasons. They do not feel the gentle pressure of the local missionary. They do not belong to the denomination to which the local church belongs. They do not have the leisure which is provided to mission employees for the purpose of carrying out some evangelistic or other programme of the Church. This is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. The life of a Church so situated is very precarious.

In the larger towns there is an added problem—the problem created by denominationalism. If city congregations have not yet attained self-support and the ability to find self-expression in social service and evangelistic effort, it is because of denominational cleavages. These churches have not been known to grow through fresh accession from Hinduism or Islam.

The educated Indian Christians have become very critical of missionary policy and practice. At first the criticism was prompted by mixed motives, partly religious and partly material. Those who were employed by the Missions, as they gained in importance, demanded that they should be placed in positions of responsibility. With the demand for responsibility came a further demand which has been rather disastrous in its consequences—the demand for equality of status and salary. These were parallel to the demands that nationalist Indians made on the British Government. The nationalist Indian asked to have a hand in governing his own people and for a share in the emoluments paid out of the Indian taxpayers' money. But the Christian asked for a share in controlling the work, and in determining the rate of his emoluments out of the money which was neither his nor his people's. Nevertheless recognising the need for fostering Indian leadership and Indianising their own work, missionary societies conceded these demands. This factor has unfortunately robbed this generous gesture of its best fruits. The vast disparity that there is between Western and Indian

standards of living introduced an unspiritual element into the scheme of Indianising mission work and produced some unseemly wranglings regarding position and pay. The Indian Christian should never permit attractions of a higher salary and a bungalow and a car to wear the garb of national self-respect. The missionary on his part has to search his conscience and find out how he could reduce the glaring disparity that exists, in spite of his pecuniary sacrifices, between his own standard of comfort and that of the people whom he has come to serve.

### INDIANISATION

In the field of missionary polity, there has been a serious confusion between two desirable aims—Indianising the Christian enterprise and Indianising mission services. The second may indirectly assist the first; but it is not to be confused with it. In Indianising mission services the following advantages may be seen. By placing Indians in positions of responsibility in mission service, we obtain a striking demonstration of mutual trust and fellowship as between Indian and Western servants of the Lord. It will be a more beautiful demonstration of Christian fellowship if Indian Christians do not expect equality of treatment in the matter of salary and allowances. They should recognise that the personal needs of a European are greater than theirs and that the European in India needs a few more comforts for health and efficiency. They should also bear in mind that it will be unfortunate to widen the gulf that exists between the educated and the uneducated sections of Indian Christians. Then some pieces of mission work will gain in quality and receive an Indian flavour if the peculiar graces of the oriental mind consecrated by the spirit of Christ are brought to bear upon such work. If salary is fixed even generously on the Christian basis of need, the working cost of mission institutions will be appreciably reduced. European missionaries who are now in charge of schools, colleges and hospitals will be available for pioneering in less developed or wholly unoccupied fields. And lastly a few Indian Christians will gain practical administrative ability which they may later be able to use for the benefit of the Indian Church.

How far Indian leadership produced by placing Indians in positions of responsibility in mission service will be of immediate



value to the Indian Church will depend entirely on two considerations. What types of existing missionary institutional work will be a permanent feature of the Christian enterprise in a rapidly changing India is the first consideration. Elementary education will become more and more the concern of the state. State education, if present trends are any indication of the mind of Hindu leaders, will be exclusively secular and even anti-religious. Missionary agencies will not then be able to engage in the type of education in which Christian religious teaching and background are dominant. The type of education which Missions can feel justified in promoting, will then have to be confined to Christian institutions for Christian children which will not receive Government aid. Medical work may also be hedged in immediately by restrictions which may make its evangelistic force nugatory. Missions may then feel that their educational and uplift work should form only a part of their general programme of work for strengthening infant Christian communities and putting them on their feet. With resources which do not expand in proportion to the scope of fresh opportunities for direct evangelistic work and the demand that there is for properly shepherding new congregations that are found in mass movement areas, educational and medical service outside the fruitful evangelistic field may come to be regarded as a luxury which missions cannot afford to indulge in.

Moreover it is coming to be realised with increasing clearness, that to meet the new opportunities of a new day in India and face the new problems, the resources of missions in men and money should be held in a fluid state. The times call for a wise opportunism in missionary policy. Institutional work definitely blocks fresh adventures and new experiments. Much talent and enthusiasm is bottled up by the exacting demands which such work make upon the time of the missionary.

The second important consideration is this. How much of institutional work carried on by missions could be taken over and run by the Indian Church with its own money. As things are to-day and will remain for many a long year, the Indian Church's financial resources will be wholly inadequate to undertake institutional work of the magnitude which missions have established in India. Even if they were able to do so, the question is—Should they do so? Missionary

institutions are not the creation of the overflowing life and peculiar genius of Indian Christians. When the Indian Church seeks to express its life, it may not express itself in these forms of service. The Indian Church should not be led into these established channels of service. It may soon wake up to find that new avenues of service better suited to its spirit and resources and better adapted to the new situation have been thus effectually closed.

Increasing association of Indian Christians with missionaries in the various Christian institutional and evangelistic activities should be welcomed only for the sake of the first three advantages. These are not by any means negligible. They demand a high degree of consecration, patience and humility in the missionary and absolute purity of motive in the Indian Christian.

#### DEVOLUTION

The problem of building up an Indian Church, truly independent of foreign support and direction is more difficult and more urgent. The existing conglomeration of denominational groups of Christian believers cannot, even by the widest stretch of the imagination, be called the Indian Church. It is felt that its state of dependence and tutelage must disappear. It is said that if the missionary desires to see the coming into being of the Indian Church, he should not continue to dominate church committees. It is also said that there will be grave danger, if he leaves church committees altogether to themselves. Borrowing arguments from the political realm in India, the watchword of missionary statesmen in relation to the hastening of independence of Indian churches has come to be *festina lente*. It is urged that the proper place of the missionary in the Indian Churches is neither at the front nor at the back but somewhere at an arm's length. He should not dominate. He should not desert. He should post himself within reach of the Church. It is not stated definitely whether he should step in only when called or whenever he thinks he ought to step in. In theory this sounds quite all right. But in practice it has not produced such results as would justify optimism. Great epochs in History were never made by wise and cautious people. They were made by fearless adventurers, who were never afraid to take the merest apology for an

opening and rush in. A policy based on the doctrine of *festina lente*, may achieve slowness but not progress.

Such caution is both needless and dangerous. If a dozen church committees commit a dozen blunders, nothing catastrophic is likely to overtake the Christian movement in India. There will not be any bloody revolution or any outbreak of vandalism. Perhaps candles may come in where they did not exist or disappear from places where they burnt. A heretical phrase or two, a heathen song, a pagan ceremony, may invade an Indian Church. It may be said that Church discipline may slacken. A few heresies of really 'made in India' stuff, will not come amiss at this time when there is such dearth of thought in the community. As for church discipline, things cannot at any rate become worse. The caution is dangerous because it is absolutely fatal to the emergence of independent thought and indigenous lines of action.

As a practical step, full or partial devolution of work on the Indian Church, has taken place in many mission areas. With the exception of large institutions like a college or a hospital, all mission work, with the funds allotted for them, has been handed over to committees of churches affiliated with a mission. Again the denominational boundaries remain intact. The type and extent of work cannot be easily changed. In other words, the machinery is still there. Only the hands that are asked to control it are Indian instead of Western. The result of this experiment has not been a failure. It has not been a conspicuous success either. For, we hear complaints that nepotism sometimes clouds judgment and confuses issues; and that Indian Christians are more eager to assume power and control finances than to serve the cause of the Gospel. If this is true, the mistake is not that of the Indian Christian. It is the fault of the system. A system which has reduced every Western missionary to the position of a ruler and administrator cannot produce any better result on the Indian. The missionary at any rate has the memory of his predecessors who, in the early days of the missionary enterprise in India, were humble and fervent evangelists, to keep before him the true missionary ideal and cause occasional qualms of conscience. But the Indian Christian who has been somewhat jealous of the authority and power of the local missionary or has been taking orders from him, is naturally tempted to play the boss, when he is given the opportunity to do so.

## CHURCH UNION

Mighty efforts are being put forth to undo the evil of the natural but unreflective importation of Western denominations. Even these do not inspire much hope in the mind of the thinking Indian Christian. What may be achieved through these efforts, he thinks, will not be a genuine Indian Church. The machinery and mechanism will still remain, but shorn of some of the irrational prejudices which have caused economically wasteful overlapping and duplication of work. But he cannot believe that it will be the home of the Indian spirit transformed by the allegiance to Christ, the natural channel of its outflow and the peculiar contribution of the Indian religious consciousness to the glory of Christ.

Union of denominations which are not separated by deep doctrinal cleavages is good so far as it goes. It makes for coordination and strength. It is a problem of missionary strategy. But it cannot have any direct bearing on the emergence of the Indian Church. Nevertheless the move should be encouraged and hastened. Pooling of the resources in men and money and their reallocation among conveniently small districts will certainly conduce to greater efficiency. In the matter of administrative work there should be decentralisation. Large central organisations should only be consultative and inspirational.

But in the South India Scheme of Union we can see a grave danger lurking. At a time when the community's greatest need is to come into first hand contact with the Lord and discover Him for itself, its attention is sought to be engrossed in theological disputations of secondary importance. Its need is to express in concrete forms of worship and service, its broad unity. But it is asked to wait till the custodians of rival ecclesiastical doctrine and polity evolve the scheme which is expected to reconcile the irreconcilable. It is impossible to see how those who attach great importance to a particular form of ordination and its bearing on the proper administration of sacraments and those who regard this as a vestigial appendage which may at any moment develop into a dangerous ulcer, can ever live together in a bond of real spiritual unity. In spite of a decade and more of friendly negotiations, such sharp cleavage of opinion does exist among the people

for whose benefit the South India scheme is being forged. Some without exaggeration and without wanting to be unduly suspicious, fear that what is being forged is a chain for the nascent Indian Church in South India. Anything less than the broadest catholicity will endanger the spiritual development of the Indian Church to be. It is extremely unfortunate that what is but a passing wave of conservatism in the Anglican Church, which reached the Indian shore only a few years ago, should be caught, crystallised and tied round the neck of generations of Christians to come. Difficulties in regard to intercommunion which were being removed by the absolute freedom of social intercourse between Anglican and other Indian Christians have been suddenly increased as a result of the attention which the Union discussions have focussed upon this matter. A considerable number of educated laymen and almost the entire body of students are very impatient of pettifogging doctrinal disputes and the consequent restriction which is imposed upon their religious liberty.

### THE REMEDY

The occasion demands not half-measures but a revolution. The foundations laid by the missionary enterprise are too weak to bear the superstructure of the Indian Church. It is by no means suggested that the Indian Church to be will be an ideal Church. Humanly speaking it will have its divisions, schisms, heresies, its failures and its achievements. But they will all be of its own making. While the political atmosphere is free of the virus of imperialism and the political gospel of India is still non-violence, truth and peace, the Indian Church should be born. A generation hence the atmosphere may change, and change for the worse. If we believe that it was Christ Himself in His own appointed time, through the instrumentality no doubt of His Western disciples, who brought the Christian community into being and that He dwells in the hearts of His Indian disciples and that His promise "Lo, I am with you always" holds good in India also, we should not be afraid of revolutions.

The revolution needed is this. The missionary societies should withdraw all their support, assistance and guidance from the urban Indian Christian communities and let them sink or swim. To continue to support these who should have long ago learnt to stand on their own legs, is to do them the

greatest dis-service. It means also that the more needy rural communities are not getting the support they deserve. No conditions should be imposed upon them regarding forms of worship, liturgies, types of ministries and denominational loyalties. Whatever they may care to keep, they may keep; whatever they want to discard they may discard. Like David facing Goliath they may have to discard much. The one last favour that the missions may do them will be to give to them the church buildings if they evolve a safe and responsible organisation such as a registered Trust, or until such time they may lend to them the use of these buildings. This need not apply to parsonages which may be sold and the proceeds added to dwindling mission funds. When the urban Christian community emerges from the temporary chaos which is bound to follow, it may not need all these buildings in the city. A crisis such as this would bring out the leadership which we desire to see. Judging from the present mood of the community, it may be safely predicted that denominational differences will go the way that they deserve to go and that fairly quickly. The movement initiated largely by laymen in some South Indian cities like Madura and Madras to bring together Christians of all Protestant denominations in common worship may prove to be the thin end of the wedge that will split the rock of denominational exclusiveness. The monthly united services in Madras are pronounced to be very inspiring. All Protestant denominations are in this, including Lutherans and Baptists who are not in the South India Scheme of Union. The testing time will come when those who are nurtured in this spirit of true Catholicity demand the freedom to demonstrate their felt unity in a common communion service.

Western missionaries, such of them as are in mission institutions in a city, may attach themselves to any one of the churches which may get organised. It would be a pity if they could find no Church which provides for them their accustomed ways of worship. They may find an English Church which would provide them what they want. If not, they must solve their own problem. It may mean the snapping of tender bonds on both sides. But the cost is not too great to pay for the coming of age of the Indian Christian community.

The question whether or not India wants more missionaries does not arise. Unless it is thought that the

missionary movement itself is a temporary movement and that the Christian community by itself can adequately evangelise India, we must say that there is room for any number of missionaries and they will always be needed. They will be needed for rural Christian communities who require their support and guidance. But they should remember not to repeat the error of imposing their denominational exclusiveness on these communities. As many of such congregations as can be taken care of by a neighbouring city church or churches, with their own resources, should be turned over to them. The Western missionary will be needed to venture forth into new fields and do the pioneering which his predecessors did a generation or two ago.

With regard to the problem of Indianising the Christian church, the only possible course is to violently thrust the problem on the urban Christian communities and leave them to solve it in their own way. Neither devolution nor Church Union has any real contribution to make to the solution of this problem.

In the meantime and side by side with such a revolution, there is need for a new orientation of missionary policy and method and for the increasing association of Indian Christians with the work which properly belongs to the missions. The following suggestions are offered:—

1. Home Boards should make a rational division of the mission field in India in order to avoid all overlapping. Missionaries should not cut across each other's path within the same administrative district or taluk. This should be possible as between all missions, with the exception of Roman Catholic and a few exclusive Protestant missions.

2. Such medical and educational work as the missions may find it worth their while to do in the changing conditions of India, should be determined on the following principles. The hospital or college should be a first class piece of pioneering effort. Or institutions should be such as are necessary to the growth and advancement of Indian congregations, young and old. A few residential high schools and a larger number of central elementary residential schools with a predominantly Christian staff and pupils would come under this category. If such institutions are cooperative under-

takings, they should not be vitiated by the perpetuation within them of denominational cleavages. Other institutions may have to go.

3. A considerable amount of medical talent should be held available for service in different localities as the need arises. A dispensary on wheels will be far more useful to the rural population of India than an ordinary hospital. Such service would be needed for a longer period than service rendered through a hospital.

4. Except for specialised type of work, Indian Christian talent should be much more freely used.

5. Specialised training to suitable Indian Christians should be made available in a larger measure.

6. The vicious atmosphere of economic competition in Christian service should be completely removed by adopting a uniform basis of need rather than of qualification, in determining the salary of Indian co-workers as it is in the case of missionaries. At present there is a double basis of need and market value. The market value is neither humane nor Christian in every case. In Christian service, legitimate need alone should be the basis. There can be no excuse for paying less than a decent living wage. In both cases plain living should be insisted upon as a worthy and outward symbol of the inner spirit of service.

7. Guilds and fellowships of celibates, living together both in rural and urban areas and holding themselves ready for any kind of non-institutional friendly service and for regular evangelistic work, should be fostered.

8. Such fellowships may also become centres of study, religious research and meditation. Facilities for these should be provided.

9. Theological institutions should be completely overhauled, both in regard to the syllabus of study and to the discipline and life of students under training. They should learn more of Indian Philosophy and Religion and less of Western theology. They should be taught plain living so that any latent capacity that there may be in them for high think-



ing may be drawn out. Above all they should learn the art of silence and meditation, an art which can only be communicated and not taught.

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

Having chastened our imagination with the foregoing reflections, we may explore the nebulous region of probabilities regarding the future of the Indian Church. We may return from this exploration with some marks of a truly indigenous Indian Church. The first of these marks is its complete financial independence. It is so because in each town or district it is a single united church. Exigencies of space or differences of language alone divide the members of the churches into several congregations. But they have a common fund to which they liberally contribute. They find that they have enough and to spare. Therefore they are able to make adequate provision for the care of the orphans and widows in their midst.

Every adult member of the church who has the gift and the experience, feels that it is his or her duty to preach the Gospel. So their immediate neighbourhood is well evangelised. Some one, a prophet, has brought before the churches the need for evangelising a distant region. The churches pool their resources and take pride in sending out their missionaries and keeping them well provided with funds. This does not prove too big a burden for them, because their missionaries are vowed to plain living and have gone forth to share fully the life of the poor to whom they have been commissioned to preach. Further, these do not launch forth on costly institutional work. They obtain much support from other agencies in the country which are working for the uplift of the poor. The contribution which they are able to make to the moral and spiritual uplift of the masses is greatly appreciated by all liberal-minded non-Christian Indians, because they have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that to become a Christian is not to become less patriotic. They are not regarded as emissaries of a foreign power which aims at cultural domination.

The work expands naturally and speedily, because the churches that are founded are put on their own feet very quickly and are made to take care of themselves, depending only upon the indwelling presence of the spirit of Christ for

guidance. The missionaries are nomads or tent-dwellers, not bungalow dwellers. They are always ready to strike their tents and move on to fresh fields of service, and to accept new opportunities. Or literally, they are ready to give up at a moment's notice their humble cottages to the church they had founded, and put up new cottages in their new fields at no enormous capital outlay.

There is a rich variety of forms of worship. The music differs from province to province, but its wordless language is understood by all because it is Indian music. Rapturous singing is the favourite method of pouring out one's soul at the feet of the blessed Lord. The recorded words and deeds of the Master form the perennial spring at which the worshipper is encouraged to slake his soul's thirst. Theological disquisitions do not form part of the sermons preached from Indian pulpits. The Lord's Table is accessible to all believers. The administration of the Holy Communion is invested with greater solemnity than the West has yet been able to achieve. But no theories are tacked on to this solemn love feast and symbol of spiritual communion. Each humble, penitent and eager worshipper is given the freedom to think his own thoughts while approaching and appropriating to himself this wonderful memorial of a supreme self-giving.

Schools of theologies spring up in many parts. But their thoughts are free from the legalistic bias of Western theology. They branch out into pantheistic and eclectic systems. Renunciation and mysticism are the characteristic foundation of all theology. Prolonged spiritual discipline, with special reference to the art of meditation, instead of mere book-lore, is given the largest place in the retreats or ashramas, which have taken the place of theological seminaries. Since spiritual discipline and not neat formulations of doctrine is the aim of these ashramas, and self-realisation in the Christian sense and not the attainment of clarity of thought, their only goal, doctrines do not assume undue importance in these ashramas. Even when they do receive such importance, their influence upon the church as a whole is not so great as to split it into warring sects. The life of believers stands rooted in the basic and childlike love for and adoration of the Lord, and to some extent on the theological phraseology borrowed by the Christian singer to capture the uncrystalizable features of the Lord's

beauty and let their music reverberate through the soul of the humble devotee.

In the matter of architecture, there is a wholesome wealth of types. They range from a wayside grotto or a table of polished stone under a spreading banyan tree, to the many-pillared mantapams and ornate gopurams. No congregation waits for the erection of a suitable building before it meets regularly for corporate worship. Nor is it eager to raise a big fund for putting up one. Where money is not available, a sylvan spot in the open waste land of the village, or a hill slope marked off into a sacred enclosure by unhewn stones, serves as a church.

In the matter of church administration, the panchayat has offered a simple and effective social organisation. Each church is autonomous. But it does not cut itself off from other autonomous churches. It lives in vital intimacy with the rest of the churches in India, not on the basis of a wooden and inflexible central organization, but through the spiritual bonds of common loyalty and common task. They unite in large all-India evangelistic service. They have great *melas* or religious festivals which afford opportunity for social intercourse to the masses of Christians and for consultation to the leaders. While no priest or other ecclesiastical dignitary exercises an all India influence, it is the born prophet whom God chooses in His own time and sends out to his church, that wields this purely spiritual influence. Through him prophecy has come to its own in the Indian Church. The union that is thus maintained is not an organic union. There is no need for organic union, because there has been no organic disunion to warrant it.

The administration of funds and properties are under the Civil Law of the land and subject to Governmental supervision through a Christian Religious Endowment Board. The business function is divorced from the spiritual, and the thousand and one vexations which arise when the two are mixed up are completely avoided.

The indigenous Indian Church co-operates with the churches in the East and the West, in a manner undreamt of in the old days when she was a receiver and not a giver of gifts. A great catholic consciousness resting on the immovable

verities of the Christian religion, namely the one Lord and the one faith, has come to all the churches. The grown up daughter, instead of pottering about in the mother's house, has set up a home of her own. And therefore the two learn from each other methods of Christian service. They emulate each other in the effort to get the teachings of Christ accepted as the law of social, national and inter-national relationships. Something more wide-spread and broad-based on the awakened consciences of men and women, than any human scheme yet devised by the collective wisdom of the statesmen of the world for the maintenance of justice and good-will and peace among men, is coming into being. Men, who once jeered at the pious professions and complete futility of the Church, hasten to pay warm tributes to her. They see that she is capable of making this world a fit abode for human beings and the children of God. This is the vision we see in the dream land of the future of the indigenous Indian Church.



## *Section II*

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### **JESUS AND NON-CHRISTIAN FAITHS**

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#### **CHAPTER II**

By

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#### **CHAPTER III**

BY

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## CHAPTER II

# JESUS AND NON-CHRISTIAN FAITHS

BY P. CHENCHIAH

THE transfiguration of Jesus does not fit in with any historic crisis in His life : nevertheless, it represents an aspect of our Lord's life and message for which the Church has not accorded a proper place. There are two incidents in the scene which symbolise the contemporary religious situation. The three disciples chosen for participation in this experience first saw Jesus in the company of Moses and Elijah, typifying the dispensations of Law and Prophecy and later they did not see 'any man save Jesus only'. In Europe and other Christian countries, Christians see Jesus only. In the unique situation in India which determines the status and influence of Christianity, we see Jesus in the company of other founders of religion or saviours of men—Buddha, Rama, Krishna. Christianity moves and has its being in the midst of live, active religions commanding the homage of millions and claiming, if human testimony counts for anything, to minister and sustain its followers in the struggle of life giving them the faith to live and courage to die with hope for the future. In India, these religions are in numbers and influence such as to compel mutual attention and respect. The life and destiny of Christians has to be studied in this vital context. We are confronted with situations in which sinner accosts sinner, saviour confronts saviour, saint greets saint. Their mutual influence makes the atmosphere in which the concrete corporate life of communities is carried on. How does this situation affect Christianity in India ?

The existence of highly developed religions each with its own philosophy of life, way of living, has demanded study from three different quarters with three distinct results. The scientific scholar committed to no presuppositions and pledged to no doctrine, has studied religions objectively and has reached conclusions which do not seem to be of much help to us in our present enquiry. On the whole, his verdict has been that men in all ages have recognised or sensed a mystery in life to



which they respond in different ways, suited to national aptitudes and historic contexts. While differences in values are perceivable, scholars are inclined to hold that any one religion has no claim for superiority over others, especially among the dominant religions of the world. Each religion satisfies a felt need, each undertakes an urgent quest giving rise to perfect systems that answer all relevant questions and provide for all demands of the spirit. Science justifies the relativist view of religions, while admitting all of them make absolute claims.

The missionary, forced by the logic of the situation, undertakes a comparative study of religions in his field. His conviction that Christianity alone can be the true religion pre-determines and conditions his enquiry. Starting from dogmatic positions which he regards fundamental, he either seeks support from other religions for the supremacy of Christianity, or else, material for the condemnation of other religions. In a sense, he has vested spiritual interests which limit the scope and usefulness of the enquiry. In the earlier stages, he had his eye only for differences and his task of maintaining that Christianity differs from other religions seemed to get confirmation from comparative study. Of late, the affinities and similarities, which apparently at any rate seem to challenge the uniqueness of Christianity, are perplexing him. He finds it more and more difficult to account for these similarities save on the ground of 'general revelation.' To maintain the integrity of special revelation in the face of a concession of general revelation in all religions presents grave difficulties. He starts with a historic religion crystallised in doctrine and dogma and sponsored by a Church which regards itself the heaven appointed custodian of truth that can suffer no change, being eternal and absolute. On this basis, he can only observe the effect of Christianity on other religions, avoiding as far as possible the question of the counter influence of other religions on his own and if forced to face the problem, takes up a defensive position.

There is yet a third quarter from which the comparative study of religions proceeds, namely from the standpoint of the convert. The convert does not stand alone in this matter, for of late, the born Christian, dissatisfied with what the Church offers him as Christianity, has been led to seek for help in rediscovering the message of Christianity from a study of the

life and experience of earnest seekers after salvation in other religions. There was a type of convert in the past who hated Hinduism and surrendered himself wholeheartedly to what he supposed to be Christianity. The convert of today regards Hinduism as his spiritual mother who has nurtured him in a sense of spiritual values in the past. He discovers the supreme value of Christ, not in spite of Hinduism but because Hinduism has taught him to discern spiritual greatness. For him, loyalty to Christ does not involve the surrender of a reverential attitude towards the Hindu heritage. His special asset in the search is that he has no co-ordinate loyalties. St. Paul and St. Peter and other apostles and the Church are not to him absolute guides. Accepting gratefully the light from these quarters, he still believes that Jesus and his demands alone are obligatory. He seeks to face the original stimulus, Jesus afresh, and understand the meaning and significance of the fact of Jesus anew. This emancipation from double bondage, namely to the traditions of Hinduism on the one hand and to the traditions of Christianity on the other, gives him the freedom to study the question of the meaning and significance of Jesus untrammelled by doctrine and dogma and seek in the living forces of Hinduism a positive key to the still inaccessible riches in Jesus. This paper endeavours to state the results of such an enquiry in their bearing on some of the issues raised for the study of the delegates to the World Conference.

A significant phenomenon which a careful and intensive study of dominant religious forces on our mind has not escaped the attention of scholars. Every historic religion starts with a historic personality of outstanding significance or power, or a discovery of a truth of a profound and far-reaching nature. Why a person or fact strikes humanity with overpowering strength and commands the homage of people is a mystery. The passage of time is punctuated with men of this outstanding type. These are 'the given', the 'original impulses' the 'radiant core', the 'perpetual spring' of religion. Jesus, Buddha, Rama, and Krishna are well known instances. Where the basis of a religion did not happen to be a historic person, it is a principle of equal moment such as the discovery of Brahman which operates as the energetic radiating centre of the Upanishadic period. The phenomenon which forces itself on our attention lies in the unexpected result of human response to these facts or persons of destiny

They challenge attention, arrest thought, command wills, rule over hearts, release tidal waves of emotion. Friends and enemies alike throw themselves around them—the former in adoration, the latter in opposition. What happens? The reactions gather in volume, meaning and emotional strength. The fact is interpreted, meaning assigned and its relation to the prevailing notions settled. In other words, doctrines and dogmas, worship and ritual, mysteries and ceremonies, gather round till at last the bright nucleus gets enveloped by a huge globe of tradition and testimony.

So far, what happens may be regarded as inevitable. But the next stage is really the fateful one in the history of religions. The circumambient mass of tradition and ritual—the religion so called—is regarded as part and parcel of the original core and acts as the original stimulus did. These traditions, doctrines and rituals become a centre of influence and begin to energise by themselves slowly clouding the original fact. The traditions and the churches in spite of their protestations to the contrary, become the centres of influence, the sources of salvation, the objects of loyalty. A religion starts with a significant fact or person creating significant institutions. These institutions are identified with the core and acquire as it were the same value as the original nucleus.

Let us illustrate. Every incarnation emphasises in the initial stages the differences between the incarnation and that which is incarnate. Jesus is the incarnation of God; Rama and Krishna, of Vishnu. Vishnu is still 'the highest'—the father or the source of incarnation—*avathari*. They all begin with worshipping God. But soon they become Gods and substitute themselves in the place of God and gain the value of God and act as God. While Krishna was the incarnation of Vishnu, soon we find that Krishna becomes God himself and Vishnu withdraws to the background. Krishna is worshipped as God and the being whom he incarnates practically ceases to function. There can be no denying that this has happened in Christianity. While Christ himself kept the difference between the Father and Son clear, the disciples did not. Both became fused into one and that one is the historic person. While at the inception the incarnation, i.e., the Son is the image of the Father, in the end, the Father becomes the image of the Son. The process is carried further with less justification. We call Jesus, Son of God, or incarnation or

the second person in the Trinity. This is one interpretation of the fact of Jesus. Other interpretations equally clearly inspired by the fact of Jesus are, in the struggle for existence, either exterminated or exiled. The accepted interpretation gains the value of the 'fact of Jesus'. Salvation results not by accepting the fact of Jesus, but by professing the correct interpretation of the fact. Jesus does not save unless you interpret him as the Church does. Worse still, surrender to the fact of Jesus, drawing inspiration for life from him, counts for nothing. If a person does not bring the doctrine of Christ, you should not wish him God-speed and this from John the loving disciple—2 John 1 : 10. The same happens with rituals. The Eucharist, probably a pagan ritual in its present form, is more than a sacrament—an object of adoration worshipped as God. Even among Protestants, the uneasy feeling exists that Christ does not act except through sacraments or acts specially through them.

Our point is not to controvert the doctrine that Jesus is the Son of God or that Communion has or may have or may be supposed to have high spiritual value. The calamitous fact is that doctrines, institutions, sacraments, priests and pastors, all join together under the name of the Church and take the place of Jesus, whom they in doctrine exalt as God. The Christian does not go to Jesus direct, but clings to the Church as the author of his salvation. The lode-star magnetises the Church and it is the Church that sets out to save and conquer, nominally through Christ, but virtually by the power of which it has monopoly. By some process, the Church becomes the medium, through which alone Jesus operates. If you do not belong to the Church—to the true Church, you cannot connect yourself with the Lord who saves. This again is theory. In practice, the Church claims to be the Viceroy of Jesus acting under delegated powers. If you do not say with the Catholic Church, that one could only be saved through the Church, you hold with left wing Protestants that the saved must form part of the Church—that the Church is something more than a congregation—a field of the special operation of God in sanctifying if not in saving. This claim of the Church and its effect in actual life should be firmly grasped before we approach the question of the place of the Church in the scheme of salvation. There is no Church, Catholic or Protestant, which is satisfied with the idea that it is a group of worshippers, just like any other group. The comparative

study of religions confirms the suspicion that the Church, as the focal point of tradition, ritual and dogma and doctrine detracts our attention from the original fact—Jesus Christ—without professing to do so and indeed protesting against such a charge. We look at Jesus and worship, but live in the Church and obey its behests or suggestions.

The signal contribution of Karl Barth to the theological thinking of the day is the merciless cutting of the globe of religion into the original core and the accumulated tradition called by him religion. The religion of Christ is not the same as Christ. To belong to the religion of Christ is not necessarily to come into contact with Jesus and to be dominated by Him. As a religion, Christianity is no better or worse than other religions. The supremacy we claim or we should claim is not for Christianity but for Christ. Curiously enough, instead of identifying this religion with the Church and removing it as an obstruction between man and Jesus, Barth has chosen to identify the Church with the doctrinal position and in a way save it from reproach. The Barthian theologian committed to a particular type of Church doctrine does not apply the axe to the Church. The Church gives us Jesus second hand as an image to be worshipped and not as a living companion. Whether it puts forward the claim avowedly or not, it operates as a religion in itself, having the value of God or Jesus. The Church like Andrews announces 'we have found Christ' and unlike him does not take us to Christ but bids us to accept Him on its testimony.

The second phenomenon which the comparative study of religions throws into prominence is the duplication of gods and saviours—the creation of 'doubles' for purposes of spiritual life. Karl Barth again draws attention to this creation of God by man. Here again the Church champions a created God, the idolatry which transfers the glory of the Creator to the creature, the creature in this case being not a creature made by God—man or beast or plant, but created God—God created by man. The missionary in denouncing the idolatry of the non-Christians has failed to sense the subtle idolatry of the faithful in the very heart of the Church which he represents. Alongside of Jesus—the fact—the devotee creates another Jesus, an exact replica of imagination and transfers his worship from the God who created him to the God whom he creates. It is a subtle psychological process, arising out

of a deep-rooted desire to have an object of worship that exactly corresponds to our hopes and desires. The Jesus of history does not fit in with our conception of life and progress and challenges our imaginative picture of the redeemer at every turn. The fact has too many angularities to fit into the grooves created by us. The Jews failed to recognise Jesus because he did not resemble the picture of the Messiah which imagination developed. The disciples of Jesus, as soon as he ceased to be a living reality, converted him to a saviour after their own heart and as the sculptor chisels and polishes the marble, so they shaped Jesus into Christ, sometimes more and sometimes less than Jesus. We counter the efforts of God to turn us into his image by turning him into our image. We used to call this Jesus of our creation the 'Christ of experience.' One fails to see why the Christ of history is not all that God gives us as necessary and why we need a different Christ based on experience. Jesus as portrayed in the records is less than God. He says so explicitly. (John 14 : 28). We want to make Him the very God—transcendant and absolute. The Jesus of the Gospels transcends the measure of man: we try to make Him the very man. He presents us a harmonised picture of God man—not merely hyphenated God-Man. But we seek to keep both God and Jesus separate from each other and man from both. Experience, we say, effects the change. The ethics of Christ is too rigorous, too much beyond our capacity. We make a Christ who takes into account our infirmities in his demands and for warlike nations becomes a God of war. This subtle idolatry is tolerated and even encouraged by the Church. A man who comes into contact with the Raw Fact of Christ, if we may say so, invariably upsets law and order. The Church, as a department of State, has always been the prop of law and order. The Christ of experience is our product and can be made to fit in with the faith and order of the Church. This is yet another reason why the Church with all its claims cannot lead us to the Christ. It has its own Christ, altars and worship. Into this alone it can induct us. Hinduism has always realised this danger to the soul and has advised the man of God to come out of the Church if he wants to perfect his soul. There is a stage in spiritual development when the Church becomes an obstacle to our reaching Jesus.

A third feature of religious consciousness—for all its humility and abasement—is faith in the infinite potential-

ties of man. The sin of science has always been the besetting sin of religion also. Science believes that infinite possibilities of evolution are present in the germ and the atom and that no external access by way of new creative energy is necessary. Religion also has immense faith in the intellect and will of man. We should not be deceived by the pious jargon that discredits reason and belittles will. St. Paul who condemned 'reason' was the greatest rationalist of all. This is obvious in the tendency of all religions to exalt propositions over life, theology or knowledge about God above life in God. Doctrines and rituals cloud the centrality of fact. Greater and far-reaching in its disastrous effect is the belief that the Kingdom of God could be realised by man with more thorough-going repentance and greater determination of will. Prayers and even divine grace, are adjuncts to this tempering of human personality to the new task. Christ however sought to establish a new universe with a new cosmic energy—the Holy Spirit. The new creation is not to be realised by man as an ideal. Other religions aim at the development of the inner potentialities of man or woman with the endowments of man, that is intellect, will or emotion. Indeed, a religion is the realisation of an end or norm or the reproduction of religious personality by the use of human emotion, will, discipline.

In this sense, Christianity is not a religion. Christianity may be conceived, and indeed it is the dominant conception, as the realisation of Christ ideal by the discipline of self just as in other religions. We practise the presence of God. We imitate Christ. We turn ourself into His image by the discipline of our will. We follow His way of life in the same way people follow any other way of life. Religion is *our* effort, *our* realisation of an end. The Church is the great exponent of Christianity as an educational process. It deals with repentance, faith, and order. It exhorts us to follow Christ and to be actuated by Him in life. The dynamic is human energy directed to a divine plan. Obedience is the great virtue of the Old Testament for the call is to obey the commandments of God by the discipline of the will. The love that moves us to great efforts is *our* love to Christ. But the core of Christianity is not here. It does not seek to make us perfect men. It does not call us to realise the Kingdom of God by the mechanism of the Kingdom of Man. The Christian is not the greatest of the woman born, nor is he a man made perfect. He is not a super man but a new man. He is a new creation and

not a prolongation or perfection of the old creation. The Holy Spirit is the new cosmic energy; the Kingdom of God, the new order; the children of God, the new type that Christ has inaugurated. The Gospel is that God in Jesus has made a new creation. Christianity has been a failure because we made a new religion of it instead of a new creation. We are exploiting our will, our reserve energies, our ideals to produce the Kingdom of God. If we realise that Christianity is not the teaching of Christ, the figure of Christ or imitation of Christ but a new birth with new human endowments, it becomes obvious that our efforts to reach the Kingdom of God by merely trying to add a foot or two to our stature is misdirected energy. The Church does not teach us the mystery of new birth. It detracts our attention from the central fact. It substitutes a new scheme to realise the Kingdom of God by a reformation of this world and of becoming children of God by repentance and faith. Indeed, the grace of God is invoked but it is seen that grace is a method of strengthening our will, determination and not a new power striking out a new creative branch of life. The power concept in Christianity is very much neglected by the Church but when utilised it is the human energy that is sought to be harnessed to the Christian task and not the new cosmic energy—the Holy Spirit. Dr. Kraemer thinks that Hinduism and Buddhism differ from Christianity in that they are anthropo-centric while the latter is theo-centric. As to the Bhakti movement, he judges it to be apparently theo-centric, not really so. Apart from the accuracy and justness of the criticism, he misses the essential point—that in practice the Christianity of the Church depends on human effort as much as any other religion, though in theory, the doctrine of grace is stressed.

If instead of using Christ and Christian experience as a searchlight to discover the defects of Hinduism, we apply Hinduism and Hindu experience to the elucidation of the meaning and purpose of Christ, we are at once rewarded with a two-fold gain. We are able to discover and eliminate the mass of reactions—including the Church and the Jesus of experience—we often mistake for Christianity and then perceive the true nature of the original core of radiating influence in the new religion. In other words, we discover 'the fact' in Christianity. The Church with or without pretensions and claim, by its exaggerated sense of worship, by its overemphasis on creed and dogma and above all, by its endeavour to



create a religion in which Christ becomes an object of worship and Christianity, a discipline of ethics motivated by human emotions and energised by human will, arrests all progress towards a true understanding of the mystery and meaning of Jesus. This Christian religion is different from other religions because Jesus is the object of worship but belongs nevertheless to the same category as others being itself a religion. But the original core of Christianity as represented by Jesus emerging in history is the power that calls for our reactions and not the reactions themselves. Viewed as a human effort directed towards divine objective, Christianity is a religion on a par with other religions. Viewed as an outburst or inrush into history, Jesus is the manifestation of a new creative effort of God, in which the cosmic energy or sakti is the Holy Spirit, the new creation is Christ and the new life order, the Kingdom of God. The effort of the Christian is to realise this new creation in the world-order by appropriating this new power. The ethics, the doctrines and the dogmas of Christianity crystallise this fact and enshrine this faith. In the light of this perception, the three major questions namely, 1. What is Christianity? 2. What is its relation to other religions? 3. What is the true Evangelism? may be discussed.

**WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?** If with St. Paul and St. John we hold that Christianity is a new development in creation of profound significance to humanity, we have to change radically the conception of Christianity as held and propounded in the doctrines of the Church. As in all things, it is not the presence of a fact that matters so much as its position in the scheme and the weight and importance attached to it. In interpreting the fact of Christ, two systems of pre-existing thought exercised a determining influence namely, the Jewish conception of sacrifice and the Roman conception of law. Who was this Jesus and what has he done for us? The answer to the question was that Jesus gave his life for us and thus reconciled us to God, that is broke down the wall of partition between God and man. There was a double strain in Judaism which offered an ideology that explained the tremendous importance of Jesus which was felt with overbearing power by the disciples. They naturally turned to Judaism for the theological formulation of their faith. From the beginning, Judaism conceived the relationship of God and man as expressed in the idea of Covenant—a promissory bond—an undertaking by God in return to the obedience of man. Religious life is a covenant—a bilateral pact between

God and man. This idea soon developed or degenerated into a reward and punishment for conformity with or breach of the commandment of God. The Jewish mind always conceived law as a command and not as an inner principle of life. Before Paul began to deal with the relation of law to life, Jewish people developed the system of thought that righteousness is obedience unto law and the promise of God of inheritance of the world is the reward for the righteous. The corollary of this was that failure to conform to law brings about defeat, disgrace and bondage in foreign lands. This line of thought did not stress the idea that sin separates God and man and prevents intercourse with him. The sin of Israel never terminated the intercourse between God and his chosen race. The sacrificial system proceeds on the mystical conception that the sin is transmitted to the sacrificial animal and somehow got rid of. But there never was, at least in Judaism, the idea that sacrifice avoided punishment. For all their sacrifices, the Jews were punished, terribly punished all through their history. This mystical transfer of sins did not touch the course of history or override the notion of disobedience and punishment. When the sacrificial system disappeared from the religious life of Christians, the sacrifice of Christ received a juridical rather than a mystical interpretation. The sacrifice became the price paid by Christ to appease the wrath of God or to reconcile man and God. Salvation was regarded as the reconciliation between God and man.

Into this complex entered the sense of guilt which undiscovered and unpunished transgression leaves as a scar on the mind. This attempt to describe life in terms of law, eschewing the mystical function of sacrifice and the meaning and function of Jesus as something to do fundamentally with the transgression of law, had its origin in the mind of the Roman Jew, St. Paul and was developed into a cast iron logical system by the Roman Catholic Church. This gave birth to the classical theology of the early Church which interprets Jesus and his message in terms of law and sacrifice. We are paying today for a religious fallacy akin to the scientific one of reading the higher in terms of lower and rejecting the overplus as a negligible entity. 'Man is a perfected biped' says science. 'Christianity is Judaism crowned, glorified and perfected,' proclaims the Church. Thus do we miss the quality of Christianity which refuses to fit in within the ambit of Judaism and the value of

the personality of Jesus where it transcends human nature when as a matter of fact, it is exactly in this 'excess' that the true import of Christianity lies. The ideology that presses Christianity into sin and salvation-saviour complex, allies it with religions but does not bring out its differentia. Higher Hinduism has moved away from the religion of sacrifices from the days of the Upanishads. It has not only moved away from sacrifice as a religious act but has ceased long ago to express its vital concepts in terms thereof. The exposition of Jesus as a propitiation does not evoke any response. As for sin, saviour and salvation—all the major religions of the world are full of it. Whatever excuse there was before the days of comparative religious study for holding that a saviour and salvation are peculiar to Christianity, we can no longer continue in the error. As Dr. Otto pointed out, Hinduism has saviours but not atoners. But atonement is a method of salvation. Atonement may indicate a difference between Christianity and other religions, but a difference which cannot be the basis of uniqueness. Uniqueness does not consist in difference, but in transcendence. In reaching the kernel of the uniqueness of Jesus, we have to change from one half of Pauline theology which the Western and Eastern Churches have accepted to the other half of his theology which though existing as a doctrine does not function as a live force. St. Paul and St. John both regard Christ as a new creation—the emergence in history of a new chapter in human destiny. Jesus is not man made perfect, but a new creation—the manifestation of a new cosmic energy. A Christian is a man born not of blood and will of man, but by the Holy Spirit overshadowing man. This new creation is alike our Gospel and its demonstration. The Word Uncreate has become created in Jesus. Human history has turned a new revolutionary chapter in Jesus. Christianity is not primarily a doctrine of salvation but the announcement of the advent of a new creative order in Jesus. This is our thrilling discovery imparted to mankind.

This feature of Christianity becomes patent not when you criticise other religions in the light of Christian dogma and doctrine, but when we examine Jesus in the light of all religions that preceded him. There is no doctrine of Christianity except perhaps that of atonement—which does not find a parallel in the Bhakti religions in India. The resemblance of Bhakti ideology to Church theology is startlingly close and hence it

cannot be the adequate description of Jesus. Jesus cannot be described entirely in terms of the past, whether that past be Hinduism, Judaism or Buddhism. Comparative study discloses that all religions are born of two struggles in the human soul from the beginning of its emergence—one a struggle to perfect itself by working out its latent energy and by overcoming sin (i. e.) the sense of conflict in man due to his incapacity to evolve all his latent energies: the other a desire to transcend its destiny. Man desires to escape sin as well as death. He wants to escape not only from his lower nature or respond to the upward pull of the ideal, but also break through Karma—not the bond, but the boundary of human personality. Man wants not only to be good, but to get beyond good and evil: not only to be reconciled with God but be like God—be perfect as God. This ambition to escape Karma is exactly what was eluding the human grasp. The other desire to unify life and end struggle has been achieved or at least perceived as within human achievement. It is the relation of Jesus to Karma that challenges our attention. And if the message of Christianity is not here it cannot be elsewhere.

The good news of Christianity is the birth of Jesus and the problem of the Christian is how to reproduce him. In one sense it is like the problem of man. If man wants to replenish the world, he must reproduce himself. If we want to establish the Kingdom of God, we must reproduce Jesus. Christianity is not a juridical or legal problem but a problem in genetics. If we are correct so far, we cannot teach or preach Christianity. We may imitate Christ. We may worship him without imitating him; we may even love him without being like him. The unique fact about Jesus is that he was begotten of God. The Christian must be begotten of the Holy Spirit. Like reproduction, Christianity is a birth process. When we reproduce Jesus and can tell the world how, we propagate Christianity. There is no other way. We have not tried this method because we ourselves do not know.

If Christianity in its distinctive nature is the creation of a new type-man out of ordinary men—a type which transcends human limitations by reason of its being the outcome of a new creative life, the Holy Spirit—then in the true sense of the term it cannot be taught; nor can it be an ethical discipline—a character produced by will-power and obedience to an external

ideal. We may teach the doctrine and dogma. We may hold up Jesus as a pattern or ideal. To the extent the world accepts these, it may be better off. But the Gospel of Jesus operates in a different region. Christianity must engross itself with the Holy Spirit, His place in creation, His methods of operation—and with the problems of new birth. We do not know what life is, yet we reproduce it. So we may propagate children of God by the aid of the Holy Spirit, though we may not understand what He is and how He operates. The Christian has to develop the Yoga of the Holy Spirit—with a new *sadhana* of eternal life. The Church and Church Government, even the Social Gospel in theory and practice, are secondary problems. The primary problem, neglected long enough, can no longer be neglected. This is why the subject of the Church does not interest Indian Christians and should not be allowed to distract their attention. We must keep to the new experiment of life, with a single and all absorbing devotion.

#### WHAT IS THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO OTHER RELIGIONS?

(2) The trend of our discussion points out the direction in which the relationship of Jesus to other religions should be sought. It is not the relation of a religion to a religion or of a theology to a theology, but of a new creation to the old. If we may speak reverently, Jesus stands to man as man stands to the animal. Man is not the fulfilment or abrogation of the animal. He is not a perfected animal. He not only fulfils, but also transcends the lower creation. Jesus is not God or man, the 'Son'—Son of God or Son of Man—He is the product of God and man, not God-Man. The Spirit of God overshadowed Mary, and Jesus was born. He is a new creation—the Lord and Master of a new creative branch of cosmos. He is the Son of God because the Spirit of God entered him. He is the Son of Man because he was born out of the mother of man—the female. He transcends us as we transcend animals. Reason is our differentia, the Holy Spirit His. In this view, Christianity neither condemns nor accepts other religions. If it perceives affinities, it perceives differences also. Other religions are answers to the questions, how shall I perfect myself, how shall I be saved from the conflict of personality—from divided self. Other religions answer the cry, what shall I do to be saved from my sins? Jesus is God's answer to man's ambition to

become like God, to escape fate and destiny, to become master of life and death. This is an aspiration of all religions for which the answer can only be a new creation. Jesus is man who has outstepped his boundaries by conquering Karma. He is the higher hope of all religions. Whether you accept or reject him, there he is, a new creation. The animal cannot reject man, nor can man reject Jesus. God's new creation has begun. If you enter it, you evolve. If you refuse to enter, you shall remain and die in the old order of life. The Holy Spirit is there. It is for you to become the child of God or son of man if you aspire to be more than man. We do not preach, teach, condemn or concede. We point to Jesus and call on the world to launch out on the great experiment of reproducing him and in doing so, become the new Son of Man with eternal life and self-sufficiency.

#### WHAT IS THE EVANGELICAL METHOD ?

(3) The evangelical effort should necessarily take a new turn. Here again we may learn a lesson from Hinduism. In the religious sphere, Hinduism distinguishes between the priest, the religious teacher and the guru. Unfortunately Christians do not. The guru like the early apostles evokes the spiritual spark in you—a process beyond belief and faith—a life process. He lays his hand and the Holy Spirit descends on you. This done, the relationship ceases and henceforward the inner light will guide, and shape you. The guru is not a prophet. He need not be necessarily a person who has attained the goal. The importance of this life-method cannot be overestimated. It takes propagation of Christianity out of the realm of propaganda. It places the new birth above conversion and affiliation to a Church. It is new life in the Kingdom. This method has always been recognised in India. We may notice that the great religious teachers of India, in the past and in the present do not lay any test of belief and character before they receive a disciple. Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Arambindo, Sri Marganathar and others have received men of all faiths as disciples and have never demanded allegiance to a creed as a condition of entry. The last thing they ask is a statement of your faith. This is not due to indifference to right belief. They believe the primary thing for them to do is to illuminate or enlighten—or to impart a life. In the light of the new life, faith and conduct will change of its own accord and by inner urge as it were rather than by exter-

nal discipline. I look forward to the emergence of a new order of gurus who will impart the new life of the Holy Spirit to those who seek. Then under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God will disclose themselves. Christian expansion will be the march of a new life which no external power or force can impede. It will cease to be a communal battle for numbers or church crusade for converts. It will be a life expanding by inner energies.

Whether the so-called Church can play any part in this life experiment, remains to be seen. Its past holds no hope. All through history, the Church has never been the cradle of new life. It has been at best the organiser of new life once it has come into existence, but normally an accommodator to the dominant forces of the old life. It is now recognised by historians, (at any rate by some of the authoritative ones) that the democratic forces of the West had their origin outside the Church and indeed among those counted with the Godless. There are Christians who now recognise that the communistic criticism of capitalism is on the whole justified though they do not themselves subscribe to communism. Yet, the Church has been the earliest to espouse capitalism and will be the last to separate itself from it. If the Church has regenerating and self directing forces within itself, why then does it always cast itself in the mould of the State? The Church may still organise, discipline and keep up moral enthusiasm at a certain level, as many institutions of society and State do. But its superior claims as a peculiar divine institution have yet to be made out. India is not yet convinced.

# CHAPTER III

## THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN FAITHS

BY V. CHAKKARAI

In the following discussion, it will be noted that the non-Christian faith that receives prominence is Hinduism, and not the other religions of which the writer cannot claim such knowledge as would entitle him to speak with assurance.

The position is this today in India. Hindu Monism, as it is called, though it is not the only form of Hinduism has fashioned a theory of religions that is accepted as an almost indisputable axiom. Apart from the fact that this would serve to avoid any serious study of Christianity, it must be admitted that in Hinduism there is a spirit that welcomes it. The historian of the Roman Empire said with his wonted irony that to the philosopher all religions are false and to the people all religions are equally true. In India, both to the Hindu thinker and the masses, all religions are equally true. It is a genuine conviction. Yet, the practical exigencies of the communal problems of India have not left this dogma untouched. To the question, why should there be opposition to a Hindu becoming a Christian if Christianity is as good as Hinduism, there has been no answer. It is felt that one's ancestral religion should not be given up. Here the individual's attitude and needs are ignored. Such a change of faith is regarded as an insult to the old faith, and a weakening of the Hindu social order which, in turn, will lead to the diminution of the political predominance that Hindu leaders enjoy in India to-day. Unfortunately, such is the real motive behind the opposition to Christianity in India. During the hey-day of Hindu revivalism which lasted from the eighties of the nineteenth century up to the Gandhian era in politics, the religious motive was prominent. Politics did not intrude into the religious sphere. To-day the religious motive, that is, of Hinduism as a faith of supreme value to the individual and society, is either conspicuous by its absence, or a subtle admixture of the two has taken its place. Most Hindu leaders are indifferent to what the Christian and the true Hindu



religious man are anxious about, viz. that man should be brought into living contact with the secret of the universe, God. Provided Hindus do not become Christians and Moslems, it does not matter to them whether they live a religious life or not.

The Christian movement in India is puzzled and perplexed by this two-fold attitude of political Hindus. There are the Sanatanists, the religious Hindus who are not perturbed by numerical landslides of Hinduism, but who insist on upholding orthodoxy in its rigidity. To such, the religious motive is supreme, and their sincerity is manifest, even though they may be regarded by the rationalists as reactionaries. To them, the loss of the untouchables, the Harijans, is a matter, no doubt, to be deplored. But they would not abate one jot or tittle of orthodox Hinduism for keeping Harijans within its fold or rather beyond its gates. To them the ancient *Varnashrama Dharma*, the caste structure, is sacrosanct, and not a single stone should be removed from it. Because of this rigid orthodoxy one feels a great deal of sympathy with the Sanatanists. They are, however, less subtle, and more candid than the political Hindus. The latter would seem to throw open the door of Hindu society to Harijans, but at the same time caste remains, and caste is still the dominating principle. Under the impact of modernism, the caste system seems to be giving way; and yet no one can say that it will not ultimately survive modern civilisation. So great is the genius of it, the genius that overcame the universalism of Buddhism, tided over the iconoclastic zeal of Islam, and has even cajoled Christianity to admit it within its sphere.

There is one other aspect of Hinduism that Christianity in India has failed to bring to the forefront. Till now, the deeper elements of Hinduism and those of Christianity have not come to close grips. To what extent they can combine and where the conflict will rage, cannot be easily predicted. The outer walls and fortifications have been attacked and breaches have been made. Hindus who are keenly alive to the weak spots are on the move to strengthen the defences, and repair the defects. No longer can Christians succeed in India by dwelling on the miseries of widowhood and child marriage. No longer can the woes of the Harijans be exploited for recruiting to the Christian Church. Nay, no longer

can the Hindus be twitted with old customs, for the Christians themselves are now, in their efforts, to bring about union insisting on the sanctity of ecclesiastical customs. While Hindus are called upon to forsake customs far older than the Christian Church, the latter calls on Indian Christians to adopt the customs of Western churches that, compared to the antiquity of Hindu customs, are but of yesterday. The old apologetics is now outmoded and falls flat on Hindu minds. Christianity and Hinduism are not the old religions that the early evangelical missionaries knew. They are new and demand a deeper analysis and finer methods of discernment.

How are we, then, to view the inter-relations of Christianity and Hinduism? In this connection, it is not clear what is really meant by relations? They are, of course, not historically related like Islam and Christianity. Nor have they had mutual reactions till the coming of the missionaries of the Roman Church and the various Protestant churches. Christianity has a far more ancient history in the Syrian Churches of Travancore and Cochin. But strange to say, this Eastern church does not seem to have produced any impression on Hinduism. It was probably because, if one may hazard a guess, the Syrian Church soon decayed into another caste within Hinduism, only keeping up its connection with Antioch and Babylon. Excluding these historical facts, we are driven to discover inter-relations on the plane of pure theology and metaphysics. Here we are at sea with no compass to show the direction and no rudder to steer the vessel. Not that we discourage comparative estimates of theological doctrines. But within the catholicism of Hinduism, more catholic than the catholicism of Christianity, hardly a single Christian doctrine can fail to find its parallel and place. This wide statement has an exception that we shall mention later on, and in our opinion it is the exception that proves the rule. To this we shall return later on, only remarking here that this noble exception is not part of the Christian evangel, but the whole of it.

Before we proceed further, some of the old distinctions that missionary preaching delighted in, must be given the quietus, though in the field of religion no idea completely dies. It will remain in remote corners and in the subconscious mind of even the liberal. These distinctions are clear-cut and dry, and have none of the natural features that connect the

species of the animal world with one another according to the evolutionary naturalists. One such is that Christianity is the true religion and Hinduism is false. A second one is Christianity is the perfect religion and Hinduism is an imperfect religion. A third one, associated with the name of Dr. Farquhar and before him with Dr. Miller of the Madras Christian College, made Christianity the crown of Hinduism. These are now untenable, especially the first one. In the second and third, there is a good deal but it is good only for the Christian who is already prepared, with a norm for the evaluation of religious ideas. In *The Everlasting Man*, the late G. K. Chesterton, displayed his genius by showing how the mythologies of Greece and Rome and their philosophies received their true completion in Christianity. Long before him, the Fathers of the Alexandrian Church like Origen and Clement did this work with consummate ability in the presence of the ancient gods, demons and philosophers. But whether they succeeded in converting the people and philosophers to the view that their religions and philosophies were a *preparatio evangelica*, history does not tell us. The truth of the matter is that Christianity influenced and convinced the ancient world of Rome and Greece to the extent that it did really, not by comparisons and contrasts of which *The Everlasting Man* is such a brilliant storehouse, but directly.

While, as we shall indicate presently, these distinctions are at fault in their appreciation of Hinduism as a living religion, it is curious that an old distinction that Western theologians drew has not been so much as mentioned. This is the distinction that Bishop Butler gave emphasis to,—that between revealed religion and natural religion; it was not a distinction that even Butler could approve of in its entirety. For he insisted that Christianity contained two religions. On the one hand, it was a republication in purity of the essentials of natural religion and on the other, the particular revelation given through Jesus of which the New Testament is the record. No doubt this treatment of Christianity by Butler was necessitated by the deistic controversies of his day. He could show, as he did, with inimitable genius, that if one believed in natural religion, then the difficulties of revealed religion are such as natural religion, too, has to contend against. That is to say, revealed religion, Christianity, is a dispensation of God, is a scheme, to use Butler's language, containing things that reason could not have discovered but are, nevertheless, not repugnant to reason.

The proof of this new dispensation is miracles wrought by its Founder and His apostles. There must be many things in it, strange, mysterious, and inexplicable, but these belong to the supernatural order which is as much subject to God as the order postulated by natural religion. To-day, Butler's argument, based on the analogy of revealed religion to natural has lost its force—not of all of it, but the greater part of it. For he who ceases to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son, ceases to believe in God as the Father. This may be put in a manner, even more startling—it is easier to believe in Jesus than to believe in God whose existence and attributes the theologian of so-called natural religion tries to prove.

Secondly, Butler's idea that there is such a thing as natural religion, apart from revelation, is contrary to the doctrines of the different non-Christian faiths. All of these claim, in some measure to have been revealed by God, except of course, Buddhism, a religion without God but where the Buddha is raised to the position of God. Thus, Butler's distinction becomes one without a difference and has to be abandoned. We have not done with the idea of revelation as belonging to religion, as a phase of man's life on earth. Butler and the early theologians, and to a certain extent, Karl Barth, would seem to believe in a primeval revelation, and that the various non-Christian faiths are systems where there are still traces discernible of it. Therefore, the truths that non-Christian religions embody have thus the ancient impress and seal, and are not mere truths that human reason has hammered out of its inner resources and from observing the natural and human order.

We shall do well to dwell a little more on this. Butler had not long done his refutation of the argument that natural religion could dispense with revealed religion, before the former was itself dispensed with. Eighteenth century science in France said, 'to use the language of an eminent astronomer, science has no need for the hypothesis of God. From nature to nature's God, the pious poet's adoration of nature as the creation of God, became a mere sentimental religion. On the other hand, nature and her laws became self-sufficient more and more. With the evolutionary view of Darwin, all traces of God's design were wiped out from nature and a voiceless and grim deity in the shape of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, was installed on the throne of the

universe. Thus, science was driven either by its own logic or by the genius of its expounders to dogmatic negation. Natural religion, in the Butlerian sense, ceased to be a religion, for even the worship of nature was not allowed. Nature was only a complex machine. And a complex machine could possess consciousness even of a high order, as the anti-machinists of *Erewhan* described by the Butler of a later day said. But somehow the human mind cannot worship a machine which has no mind, much less a heart, but is controlled by an outside intelligence located within or without it.

But in these days the old Newtonian physics has collapsed, says a great mathematician. The view that the universe is a machine, is found out. On the whole, it is a machine, but in the ultimate analysis of its atoms, it is not a machine. Another mathematician has gone to the length of reviving the doctrines of Berkeley and of Plato, describing the architect of the universe as a geometer. But here science stops. It knows nothing of his mind and will and design. Thus, agnosticism once again sweeps over human speculation. If the human heart claims to be heard, science turns a deaf ear to it. Through the thunder there does not peal forth a human voice, "A heart I made and a heart beats here." At the most science knows the supremacy of the mathematical mind and nothing more; at the least, a vast machine grinding on its way through endless æons. This conception of the limits of reason can be acknowledged by all religions. Hinduism, for instance, goes beyond reason and appeals to revelation. The *Brahman* stretches beyond the categories of reason. These can only be employed not in their positive significance but negatively. To apply these to God, to describe Him thus, is to make the Infinite finite. To this extent, natural religion in the Butlerian sense, is proved by reason that there is an Intelligence by whose activity the universe has come into being and sustained and may ultimately cease to be. But of the nature of this Intelligence and His relations to us, humans, if there be any such, science is profoundly unaware, and may continue to be so till the end of the chapter. Here comes the necessity of faith, that it takes man beyond the bounds of reason. Where reason falters and fails, faith believes and is assured of the substance of things not seen, being itself its own evidence. What constitutes faith, whether it be creative or merely receptive, whether it is dynamically active in

penetrating into the mysteries of God, or it is only a mere outgoing to Him when He manifests the unmanifested,—on these there are differences among theologians of Hinduism as among those of Christianity. The *Bhakti* school says, the *Bhagavan* comes to us of His own free will and grace, when the *guru* opens the eyes of our understanding. The philosophical monist does not agree with this, saying, the *Brahman* neither comes nor goes. It is realisation of the inmost in man. When the inmost depths are plumbed, the One is realised in the ineffable state. Thus, in brief, we have outlined the view that Hinduism, like Christianity, claims to be a revelation from God and cannot be assigned to the sphere and functions of natural religion.

The present writer's own experience as a Hindu and his contacts with religious-minded Hindus are evidence that Hinduism satisfies its votaries. It used to be said and is still held, that the needs of man cannot be satisfied by Hindu thought and its practical *Sadhanas*. Where, therefore, Hinduism ended, Christianity began. In Christianity are to be found the resources for full spiritual maturity. An interpretation like this is vitiated by subjective attitudes. Because Hinduism cannot be satisfactory to the Christians, it must be equally so to the believing Hindu—such a conclusion cannot be drawn. We might as well say that because Fascism and Communism are hateful to the democrat, therefore they are and should be disliked by the Italian and the Russian. The Hindu psychology is affected in quite an opposite manner. We must, therefore, candidly recognise the manifest fact that Hinduism does provide the spiritual nourishment that Hindus demand. What becomes then of the oft-repeated assertions of converts from Hinduism, genuine and keen-minded, that it was the inadequacy of their ancestral religion that opened the way to Christianity? There is the famous example in the Christian Church of St. Augustine; and before him of St. Paul. These analogies from the Church have been held to be typical of the mental process that leads souls from non-Christian faiths to Christianity. When we consider St. Paul's conversion, it does not bear out the fact that modern liberal theology sees in it, viz., that he was dissatisfied with the legalistic interpretation of Judaism and, therefore, the Gospel appealed to him as leading to the path of true righteousness which is of God through faith in Christ. It was an ordinary mental evolution and on ordinary principles of mental trans-

formation his conversion is sought to be explained. On the contrary, he always said that it was a revelation of the Son to him; not mediated by any human agency or by the ordinary laws of mental evolution. Later on in the light of the Gospel of the Cross and the Resurrection of the Lord, he could see the inadequacy of the law, of all human means, to redeem man from the realm of the evil and the good. Before he was known of Christ, he could not have reasoned, as he did, in the Romans and the Galatians. So much is this the case that modern Jewish scholars like Prof. Montefiore, regard Paul's estimate of the Judaism of his day as prejudiced and one-sided. They account for his conversion on the hypothesis that he came under the sway of the mystery religions current in Asia Minor, and among those he found the Christ-cult the most satisfactory from his Jewish upbringing. Such an explanation does not explain nor is it in agreement with Paul's own version and experience. Besides, it does not help the evangelist who claims that non-Christian faiths fail to satisfy their adherents. Even on this ground, it was the introduction of the new view of the mystery-religions that profoundly affected his religious attitude and his outlook on the religion of Israel and its destiny.

To dwell on this example of Paul a little longer, he saw the fulfilment of the law in Christ, only after he submitted to the Lord. The Old Testament then became really the old religion which pointed to Him. In every page of it and in the election of Abraham, in the choice of Jacob, and of Ishmael and Hagar, Sinai and Zion, he saw the prophecy that was to be fulfilled in the Lord. According to the righteousness which is of the law, he was blameless. If this is the criterion, no dissatisfaction need be felt. Paul's statement of the gospel as the superseding of the law by the gospel had no meaning to the devout and orthodox Jew. Further, he could not see in the judicial murder of Jesus all those tremendous truths of God's new manifestation of Himself to men. This was revelation, the pure act of God, the vertical on the horizontal, to use Barth's expression. It was not part and parcel of the Old Testament, immanent in it and waiting to be unfolded by Paul's genius. It was the revelation of the Son to him that wrought the change and gave the new conception of the Old Testament to him which his Jewish brethren in Israel after the flesh, refused to accept.

The principle, thus exemplified in this noble instance of Paul, must be the one that should guide us in our search. All religions have each one its own centre from which proceed the radii to the circumference. These circles, these religions, are self-contained and self-consistent. They do not intersect as religions except where history lays its hand. As between Hinduism and Buddhism, there is such a historical connection as between Islam and Christianity and Judaism. Apart from such historical occasions, the religions stand round their own centre. There are no doubt analogies, rather ideas and practices, apparently similar in significance, and comparisons can be made between them. The basic ideas are different; and no common accepted standard can be found that will justify them. To this extent the Indian maxim that each religion is good to its own followers is right. It is right to him up to the stage when a new element enters that shifts the centre of gravity from the old to the new. Both the Hindu and the Gandhian type and the Christian and the missionary type follow the same principle and commit the same mistake. Both believe that a common standard is always present for the evaluation of different religions. The former, using it, arrives at the conclusion that all religions are equal. The latter that Hinduism is imperfect and unsatisfactory, whereas Christianity is perfect and satisfactory.

If this is so, as we believe it is, why should the Christian evangel be preached to the Hindu? If Hinduism could satisfy the spiritual needs of its followers, why bring in Christianity at all, and not leave him to work out his own solution in his own faith? The simple answer is not that we want to bring the Hindu from one religion to another, from a false to a true religion. This is too simple a statement to cover all the relevant facts. Christianity, in this view, is not a different religion so much as a different region. If it be further asked why the Christian region should be preferred to the Hindu, the answer is that no one actually does so, till the Lord chooses to call him. That is the undoubted fact on which Christianity as the revelation of God in Christ moves. When God calls, if the call is heard by man, what moves him is not that his old country is bad but that he has to obey the heavenly invitation. There is nothing in Christianity that can validate its contents except the call and election by God. Thus the question is removed from the controversies regarding doctrines and rites to God's own design. Let me illustrate this view



that would steer clear of all the shoals and rocks on the shore to the boundless ocean of God's grace in Christ that takes little or no account of man's antecedents in religion when it lays hold on him.

When Peter in the Acts hears what Cornelius, the Roman Captain, described regarding the vision he had, Peter said, I clearly see that God makes no distinctions between one man and another; but that in every nation those who fear him and live good lives are acceptable to him (Weymouth's New Testament) Cornelius himself said that an angel said "Your prayers and charities have gone up as a memorial before God". In the character sketch of Cornelius, which may be taken as a typical conversion to Christianity in the original sense, the gift of the Holy Spirit, some features are worthy of our particular notice, as bearing on our subject (1) God deals with individuals (2) There is no mention of the religion or sect to which he was affiliated (3) Probably he was an Italian and certainly an officer in the army—his calling in life, probably a more personal affair than his religious ancestry (4) His religious disposition is described, his inmost longings as expressed in prayer and his philanthropy (5) Peter says that he has learnt that God takes no account of his religious creed, but He makes known His acceptance to the individual (6) This acceptance is primary and leads to a future revelation of His will as described in Jesus. From this luminous narrative the mind of the Lord emerges like the Rock of Ages from the stormy sea of religious polemics. He accepts a man to whatever religion or sect or nation he may belong—not only a son of Abraham, or a member of the Christian Church. Christ's evangel to such an accepted soul is a further gift. It is not a new religion added to the old or superseding it. For it is a gift; *sue generis* springing from the will of the Lord. To the man, accepted of the Lord, a mere narrative of the Lord's earthly life, death, and resurrection, opened the door of faith and conferred the gift of the Spirit. In the new Testament there are few or no contrasts and comparisons between the Gospel and non-Christian faiths. But there is one glaring comparison. That between the Gospel dispensation and the Mosaic. There are, however, references to the Thessalonians giving up idols to serve the living God, to other Christians being taken from darkness to the marvellous light of the Gospel. The emphasis is on the positiveness of Christianity and not the polemics, on the spiritual and moral state of Christians rather than on their religious beliefs.

This peculiar position of the New Testament must lead to a different conception of the non-Christian faiths. To grasp this vividly, a distinction should be made in our estimates viewed from the philosophical as distinguished from the devotional or prayer life. The former rarely, if ever, points to the picture of a struggling and sorrowing soul who feels that his life has been defeat and to whom the world is an unintelligible burden, and God's face seems to be far off in rolling clouds and darkness. The philosophy is a rounded whole, perfected by the discussions of centuries in the schools. The soul crying to God in agony and despair, or exalted by a glimpse of His grace and truth; sinking in the deep mire or lifted up to the holy hill—that is the object of God's solicitude; so that the Psalms take us deeper into the heart of the religious men of Israel than the historical books where a philosophy of history selects and rejects facts. Here is the cry, Why standest thou far off? Oh my soul, why are thou cast down within me? Out of the depths have I cried. This is religion. And how was the storm tossed and despairing soul of the Psalms comforted? Some of them are unrelieved in gloom and heart-rending despair. How did the salvation of God shine out to them? We are not told how the Lord came to them, but certain it is that light came to them out of darkness. Can any religious philosophy analyse the secret? The broken and contrite heart is precious unto Him. No one meets Him and is lifted up except by His grace, and His grace alone. But how this grace, mysterious, ineffable, and falling like rain on the dry plains of India, is mediated to the hungry and thirsty soul, is more than he can say. Those in pre-Christian and the Christian centuries who had no knowledge of the coming of the Blessed One but cried with strong tears, were saved by the same grace that saves us to-day, though we now know Him—by no means a personal merit.

The application here is that the Hindu *bhaktas* who wept and rejoiced in God, in their loneliness and self-loathing were visited by Him. This is, to the present writer, an indubitable fact of experience. Leave alone the academic theologies of the Vedanta and Siddhanta, of monism and dualism qualified or unqualified, and take the genuine utterances of the singers, say, in the Tamil land. Even in this devotional literature, a good deal is conventional and credal and therefore rhetorical and merely rhythmical. The

pent up agony rushes through here and there and the man stands a shivering and sad soul before him. One such poet of the South country was Ramalinga whose hymns have gone to the hearts and homes of our people. He depends on what, for the salvation of his soul, rather for the good of men? Not on the Vedas, the philosophies, and even the worship in temples—sacraments and rites, but on the love and grace of the Lord. This love and grace are often expressed in mythological medium, as Siva drinking the poison which came out of the mouth of the serpent—Vasuki, or of the same God killing Death (Yama) to protect His worshipper who took refuge in Him, and so on. The experience of His grace was prior to the myth, and explained it. It formed, no doubt, to many, if not to all, a rock fact for the soul's dependence on His grace. This emergence of the idea of grace out of the conflict with the rigid law of Karma, the triumph of grace over law in Hinduism was achieved not alone, we are assured, by the unaided human heart but by the interposition of the Lord Himself who showed to men, apart from the historical revelation in Jesus Christ, His saving grace.

As between Christianity and Hinduism as rival faiths, comparisons are futile and fruitless, to say the least, apart from the emotional wrangles and wriggings they cause. People are wedded each one to his own. And the controversialist who thinks of triumph, cannot escape from the suspicion of prejudice and intolerance. Nor can the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, if applied to the religious field, be ever a safe criterion. That Christianity alone, as is at present understood and practised, will survive the conflict of faiths in modern India, may be a matter of faith, but it cannot be a present argument. Nor should it be forgotten that the fittest is not always nor even often the best of its kind. History is a strange court before which to argue the respective merits of religious truth. A doctrine, it may be claimed, that has stood the test of time, may well be regarded as a truth or as containing truth. If this be so, Hinduism may well point to it as being in its favour, besides being the religion of millions. Time and numbers cannot be claimed by Christianity, for Christianity is but of yesterday and the religion of only a minority of the world's population. Thus, we are forced to leave behind the test of St. Vincent *orbis terrarum*, the test of catholic validity. We turn our gaze from the dim plains where rival faiths battle to the individual heart which

knowns its own bitterness where no man intermeddled. Then the distinction is seen as between not Christianity and Hinduism but as between the Hindu and the Christian. The salvation of each, as understood by each, is by the grace of the Lord; the former by the grace of God without the historical Christ and the other by the grace of God in Christ.

Why, then, should the Gospel be proclaimed to the Hindu, if the Hindu can be saved and is saved by the grace of God, apart from the historical Jesus. The reason of it is not to be found in the alleged supremacy of Christianity over Hinduism, but in Christ Himself who reveals Himself to the preacher. This reason is not intellectual nor historical; it cannot be exploited for evangelism. The evangelist who puts forward arguments of this type, accounts for the faith in him by arguments that not only fall short of it but are irrelevant to it. To use Barthian language, even Christianity, as a historical residue—and not as Revelation, is only a finger post, pointing to the Blessed One. Christ cannot oppose Hinduism nor does He. He comes to the heart, weary and heavy laden, as He came to the Samaritan at the well of Jacob, apart from the controversy of Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim. No doubt, it is hard for the rigorous knight-errant of the faith to be deprived of the ordinary weapons of controversy. The true Christian evangelist, however, feels again and again how impotent his weapons are. Hinduism, like the ghost in Hamlet, is intangible. It seems to dissolve but reunites to appear again. It is a spirit and not a mere casual intellectual deposit. When he discards the carnal weapons, he is armed with those of a spiritual kind. Confessed failure of the endless debates about Hinduism and Christianity is the condition precedent. The duellists throw away their swords, and after shaking hands, they retire, each one to his own inmost heart. The Christian hears the whisper of the Lord that not unto him but to Him belongs mercy that follows the wandering soul. To the Hindu, perhaps, He comes, revealing Himself as the Crucified one and *Rishi* or perhaps as a stranger whose face is veiled in an impenetrable mask. The word of Mercy is spoken, and the heart overflows with rapture because of the undeserved forgiveness—a miracle of the divine love. This becomes a sacred memory which sustains him ever after at times of defeat and darkness, the presage of a fuller victory and light. Thus, he goes on rejoicing and sorrowing, talking to the world of some recondite philosophy

which is apart from the real secret of his salvation. When his eye opens on another day in another world, he will know who has saved him. Till then the veil is on His face; then it will be lifted, and he will behold Him as He is.

This long argument is not meant to suppress the study of Hinduism and its relation to Christianity by way of comparison of doctrines and sacraments; They are sometimes useful; but this raw utility should not blind us to its limitations. The Lord is not to be found in the thunder of polemics nor in the fire of comparative religion. He refuses all such comparison. But there are, however, many helps that have been, in experience, found of some value. To these we return, finding that we cannot dispense with human means. Let me enumerate some of them. (1) Even a simple picture of the life of Christ moves, and the appeal penetrates more deeply than is thought. But the difficulty of drawing such a picture is great, indeed. There are elements in the life of the Jesus of history, as He is called, that cannot be understood by a devout Hindu. The traditional idea of Jesus meek and mild, may attract. But what about His terrible denunciation and what critics have called His fanaticism! His love was not of the ordinary sentimental type nor His anger—anger which the Hindu is accustomed to consider not befitting the life of a good man. Therefore, it takes some time of calm thought before he can see the appropriateness of such love and such anger. His love is not of the exacting and monopolising variety that the strong man wants to shake off, nor of the pitying and clinging type that the weak man delights in. There is no name in any language for it. This love is that of Jesus, apart from every other. His anger has no element of egoism. It is the pure flame of the divine wrath. To submit to it is to become pure and radiant in the light. (2) The lives of individual *bhaktas* of the Lord, if they reflect some glory of His, have a strange magnetism. There are some such among us but that light is hidden with Christ in God. The true Christian *bhaktas* shrink from the vulgar light of publicity: whereas in India sanctity is often paraded with pomp, and admiring followers cry up its merits and create awe in simple minds by keeping the hero behind closed doors and silence. (3) There is one strong proof the very mention of which will bring a smile of pity to many enlightened moderns, that is, the gift of healing, by spiritual means. Not to dilate on this, it must suffice to

say that any such manifestation of power may reveal more than all our subtle reasonings.



## *Section III*

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### **THE CHURCH**

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#### **CHAPTER IV**

By

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#### **CHAPTER V**

BY

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE CHURCH AND THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN

BY P. CHENCHIAH

The World Missionary Conference has chosen for its deliberations the subject of the Church. We wonder whether the Executive was rightly guided in the choice. The original venue of the Conference probably determined the topic. The Chinese are said to be practically minded, averse to metaphysical discussions. Engaged in a life and death struggle, the Chinese would however have preferred to contemplate the grace and power of the Lord that sustains and rescues those in the shadow of the valley of death. "The Church"—could hardly have appealed to them in their present situation. India longs for a deeper understanding of Jesus and a new insight into his saving power. We too are in the grip of a great national and spiritual unrest. For some time, the seers in India have been searching for the general purpose of God in his revelations to different nations and peoples and are hoping for a fresh unveiling of divine power. Elucidation of the relation of Jesus and the religions of the world or fresh light on the power Jesus brings into creation would have suited the Christian and the Hindu alike. The Conference meets in a world keyed up with nervousness and hysteria, not knowing when a disastrous war might descend on them. The foundations of civilisation and culture are crumbling. A dismayed and distressed humanity requires the vision of the Lord and not an exposition of the "Church".

The Church has gathered round it greater and stormier controversies than its Master. In all probability, the Lord himself has a controversy with it. Tact and diplomacy, conspicuous in the choice of the leaders of the Conference may avoid controversial issues and direct the attention to more practical channels. But meeting in Asia where the Christians have not inherited a Church tradition, but are still in the birth throes, as it were, the Conference cannot avoid the primary problem of the Kingdom of God. We should like to ask in all humility, hoping to get an answer, by what right Christendom has all but jettisoned the Kingdom of God which occupies so

central a place in the message of Jesus and substituted in its place the Church of which the Master said so little and the disciples talk so much. We would be grateful for guidance whether the new Christian communities should not eject the intruder and rethink Christianity in terms of the Universe of God.

In this article, the writer has no desire either to criticise the Church, or to make a confession of faith about it. He endeavours to state how an Indian not born in the Christian community, not inheriting a Church with a tradition, yet acknowledging Jesus as Lord, reacts to this institution, when he looks at it from a background largely contributed by intuitions, inhibitions, insights of his ancestral faith—Hinduism.

#### THE CHURCH IN THE PAST

Three conceptions of the Christian Church are held by Christians.

I. (a) The Church represents Christ on earth. It forms his body and continues his incarnation. Since there can be no salvation without being rooted in Christ, the Church becomes the sole instrument of salvation. In this way of thinking, you are saved because you belong to the true Church—not you belong to the true Church because you are saved.

(b) Another view reaches the same conclusion without identifying the Church with the Saviour or claiming for it the value of Christ. The theory lays under contribution the idea of delegation of powers. God to whom belongeth all power has clothed the Son with His sovereign prerogative. Christ delegated his powers to St. Peter on whom he founded the Church entrusting him with the keys of heaven—empowering him to bind or loose, to save or damn. In apostolic succession have descended the fathers of the Church. The saving grace flows from the fountain head—God—through Jesus and on to St. Peter and canalised through a succession of Church officials reaches the sinner. The hierarchy of the Church derive their power, authority and sanctions straight from God and not from the congregations. Sacraments are absolutely necessary for Christian life and growth. But they are spiritually efficacious only when administered by the validly ordained—that is, by priests set apart for the task by those who stand in the line of

apostolic succession. The Church guards the doctrine protecting Christians from heresy. It alone has authority to formulate the pure doctrine. Jesus, now on the right hand of God, carries on his saving work through the Church and its officials. As the Lord so ordained it, there can be no salvation outside the Church. The Church, though subordinate to Jesus, holds supreme dominion over the Christian. It may be noted that in this conception, the rulers of the Church are the Church. The congregation forms the flock—ruled, protected and fed by the shepherds—the fathers of the Church. One can easily perceive the resemblance to kingship. The king and the bishop are both anointed of the Lord. King first, kingdom next. Church first, the saved next. The king and the bishop both are crowned, enthroned, live in their palaces, rule over their subjects—the faithful.

Under either of the views above mentioned, the Church becomes all in all, the author and finisher of salvation. God rules through his vice-regent, endowed with infallibility. The 'delegation' may be so complete as to amount to practical 'abdication'. We have described the classical and catholic conception of the Church.

II. The Protestant conception starts at the other end with the saved. We are saved by faith through grace and *not* through the Church. God deals with the sinner. His grace operates directly on him without mediation. The Church is the fellowship of the saved. The doctrines are in the scriptures to be understood with the illuminating help of the Holy Spirit. Councils are not necessary for the purpose. The saved are the body of Christ. Sacraments are the outward expressions of inward grace. They do not save. The Christian uses them as aids to spiritual life. The congregation elects the minister. He derives his authority from his electors—and the electors from God. They are guided in the right selection by the Holy Spirit. The Church does not play a part in the primary drama of salvation. It comes into existence for the benefit of the Christians. The Protestant theory of the Church corresponds to the democratic theory of the State. All political power belongs to the people. They exercise it through Parliaments. Kings and Parliaments derive their power and authority and law and its sanctions from the people. God's elect—the saved souls are the recipients and reservoirs of all spiritual power. The Protestant conception of the Church discards the whole mechanism

of delegation which forms the vital part of the Catholic conception. St. Peter and the apostolic succession are nowhere.

In what sense then is the Church essential at all? The logic of the Protestant position suggests an answer in the negative. Few Protestants however are prepared to go to this length. Christ established the Church just as he established Baptism and Communion. They are therefore essential—not indeed for salvation, but for fuller life and growth. The Church constitutes a divinely ordained environment in which the Christian can flourish. The Church and the Sacraments should be accepted as they issue from the Master whether we discern any utility in them or not. The question frequently occurs in India why a Hindu convert should take baptism and join the Church. The reason advanced has always been that it was so ordained by Jesus whom the convert accepts as the supreme authority. The texts in favour of the Church are not as clear or decisive as in the case of the two sacraments. Matt. 18: 19-20 however afford the necessary spiritual basis. Some blessings are given to the Church and could be received only by the Church. The task of evangelism pertains to the Church in a peculiar sense.

The democratic impulse in Protestantism has forged new forms of Church Government—congregational or presbyterian, characteristically distinguished from the hierarchical type. Nevertheless, the episcopal structure can be accommodated in the Protestant scheme. Just as a republic can have presidents, commissioners; ministers—officers of every rank and status corresponding to those in the monarchy, and may even have kings and lords as in England, so Protestant Churches may have archbishops, bishops,—even somebody corresponding to the Pope, provided they are elected and derive their power from the congregation. The recommendation in the Union scheme that Protestants should accept episcopacy follows from such a possibility.

III. In order to understand certain experiments at Church union attempted in India, it may be useful to refer to the Church of England. The Church of England manifests the peculiar genius of the Anglo Saxon to hold the opposites together. This Church resembles a dumb-bell. It does not so much unite the two spheres as hold them together. The High Church represents one sphere. This section believes

with the Roman Catholic in the true Church, in the hierarchy, in the supreme sanctity of sacraments. They accept apostolic succession and claim to possess it. They regard the Church as an instrument of salvation. They only reject the Pope. In the present mood, they may even accept him. Probably there are some among the High Anglicans who do not subscribe to the theory that the Church stands in the place of Christ, yet hold the institution to be a divinely appointed means of salvation. The Low Church on the whole accepts the Protestant view of the Church as a God appointed institution not for salvation, but for the growth and perfection of the spiritual life. The coupling rod of these two incompatible spheres but for which they would fly apart, is the episcopal form of Government, the creeds and the sacraments and the Prayer Book. Few modern Churches need a mechanism of Government, since they have none to govern. In the Catholic Church, the paraphernalia of Government happens to be a survival of the days of its temporal power. In the Church of England, the mechanism does not serve the purpose of Government, but supplies the iron frame which holds together its component parts. It will thus be seen why in the Union negotiations the adoption of episcopacy becomes an essential condition, for, without it, the unity of the Church of England itself is endangered. By the introduction of the elective principle, the democratic tendencies of the Low Church are satisfied. In the appointment of its highest officer, the call of God, the election by the members of the Church or its representatives, the selection of the Parliament, are made to synchronise—indeed a miracle—though a make-believe one.

The prevailing views of the Church concur in regarding it as a divinely established institution, though differences obtain as to its object—whether a means of salvation or an organ of utility. The Church forms part of 'the given' in Christianity like Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It does not result from the combination of Christians and does not stand on a par with other association of men. It belongs to the objective order, having an existence apart from Christians—its members. We enter into the Church—we are not the Church. A feature of religious associations of Christians in the West has always been their tendency to become corporations—abstract entities having an independent existence in the eye of Law. When Christians associate, an association

with a separate life of its own emerges. The Lord operates in a special way in the Church, and the individual does not get the blessings promised to the Church if he stands outside by himself.

IV. The laymen who form the Church in a real sense—who at any rate give it body, features and shape—are not troubled by any of the theories above mentioned. They regard it as a useful institution—useful for worship, fellowship and propagation. Whether divine or human, whether instituted for salvation or for sanctification, whether authoritative or not, it, in practice, serves a special social and spiritual purpose. This is sufficient for most Christians. This view may meet acceptance in India to a large measure.

#### THE HINDU MIND AND THE CHURCH

How does Hinduism view the complex of ideas that gather round the conception of Church in Christianity. The Hindu had no occasion to pass his judgment for the simple reason the Church does not come into his life. But in every Christian of South India (except in the case of Mohammedan converts) the Hindu lives as part of his inheritance and moulds his opinions often unconsciously. Space forbids anything like a satisfactory treatment of the fascinating subject. I propose to state categorically some of the main features of the Hindu spiritual outlook reserving detailed treatment for another occasion.

(1) The Hindu mind may be said to be institutional in social life and highly individual in religious life. Socially the Hindu believes in communism—using the term for the belief that society as a whole exists apart from its members and has a right to dominate his life. The need for combination of the faithful is not denied. But the merger of the individual in a large group should be resisted in religion. Socially, permanent groupings are essential for progress but not religiously.

(2) One of the fundamental principles of Hindu sociology holds that society should not be organised throughout. There should be open areas in society where the individual owns no master and suffers no external restraint. This free space should be the domain of religion. In the old-style Hindu houses, there was always a open yard in the centre—

the symbol of religious freedom. Hinduism organises strongly on the social side in order that man may be free religiously. The sadhu—the man of religion gets the freedom of society—stands beyond the obligations of caste which controls society. One of the main issues of modern life touches us vitally just here. The modern believes in organising society throughout, the State politically and the Church spiritually. The Hindu does not concur with this view.

(3) This leads to another axiom of Hindu polity that man should not be ruled by a single central institution. Theory and practice in the West tend towards the setting up of an absolute authority over the citizen. In theory, the State has absolute dominion over the subject. In India, we have always felt that liberties are best guarded when the controlling power stands diversified and not unified. We favour the conception of a corporate state. In other words, the Indian view of life opposes centralisation in body politic. The Indian village affords a good example. It exists as an unitary cell and has always refused to combine with other units to form a large whole. Villages are island societies. In the village there is no central authority. The temple and the guild, exercise influence from different quarters. We had Empires which tried to work the whole country into a huge complex organisation. The Indian genius resisted all such efforts. An all powerful organisation dominating religious life is repugnant to Hindu instincts. Life should be governed from different quarters and not from a single centre. Hinduism insists that small units are far more enduring and powerful in religion than central organisations.

(4) By far the most arresting feature remains to be mentioned. There has always been a strong feeling in Hinduism that in higher religious life, there should be no visible, tangible, concrete institutions, no solid power-houses—not even dynamos. India presents to the modern world the best known example of life governed by the intangible custom—which Manu declared is transcendental law. In ancient India, law had no connection with a sovereign. The king administered the law but the sages propounded them. Laws were not made by legislatures. This rule of the unseen prevails pre-eminently in religion. There man absorbs the free energies of spiritual life. He comes into contact with unseen realities—



obeys unseen masters, yields to invisible forces. The religious man converts himself into a dynamo, keeping in touch with spiritual powers all through. This accounts for the absence of anything like a church in Hinduism. The temple—the largest instrument of religion has no resemblance to a church. Neither the worshippers, nor the priests are organised. We cannot think of a worshipper being a member of the temple. A temple is just the house of the deity as much as a palace is the house of a king. Visitors to a palace are not a community nor are worshippers in a temple. In Hindu religion there are no corporations. Hindu society organised into castes forms one huge corporation. But in religion there are only partnerships. Lawyers understand the difference between a corporation and a partnership. Partnership is a combination of men for business. It has no existence apart from partners. A company or corporation is a creature of law, recognised as an entity separate from its members. Hinduism does not tolerate corporations. A church has always been a corporation in the West. We can now understand why the 'Church' challenges many of the deep-seated intuitions of the Hindu. For the same reason, the emphasis on the Church and schemes of Church union resulting in huge organisations, create subconscious misgivings in the Indian Christian. Hinduism has rejected after due deliberation the ideas that lie behind the Church—as detrimental to true growth in religion—as fatal to the freedom and liberty of the soul. The Hindu profoundly distrusts the visible Church for the very reason it obscures the invisible powers.

#### CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

It may be said that a Christian should not accept the adverse verdict of Hinduism on the essentials of his religion. Indian Christians regard Christ as the supreme authority in the realm of the spirit. His commands are not to be questioned, but implicitly obeyed. Where the Lord speaks, all religions must hold their peace and hear reverently. If it were established beyond controversy, dispute or doubt that Jesus established the Church and assigned it a function—whether in saving or in nourishing—then the verdict of any religion against it does not merit consideration. But where the Christian wants to be assured whether Christ established the Church or not, and even if he did not establish it while on earth, it came into existence by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or if he wants

to determine if as an institution it ministers unto our spiritual life—the opinion of Hinduism has a relevancy. Those who are acquainted with Hinduism in its purer and higher forms cannot but entertain a very high opinion of its spiritual intuitions. Her considered judgment against the Church as it exists, imposes on the Indian Christian the obligation of instituting a searching inquiry into the scriptures with a view to know the mind of the Lord. It may be taken as a safe rule that in matters not clearly explicated by our Lord, the instincts of Hinduism in matters spiritual are worthy of the highest respect especially when confirmed by the wisdom of the Jews.

An objective and impartial study of the scriptures brings out the fact that in the sayings of our Lord, the idea of the Church as we understand it, does not occur. The texts usually quoted as lending support to the mention of the Church in the Gospels do not necessarily refer to an institution. Indeed, it would be difficult to hold that Jesus anticipated the growth of any institution like the Church as an integral part of this religion. So conspicuous is the absence of any reference to the Church in the utterances of our Lord that scholars like Dr. Streeter have to justify the institution as the fruit of the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Church as understood by Churchmen, even if mentioned was not accorded an important place in the scheme of Jesus. As clear as the absence of reference to the Church is the place and prominence given to the Kingdom of God. It may be said that practically the whole of the teaching of Jesus turns round on this conception. His ministry at every stage relates itself to the Kingdom. The parables were taught to explain its nature. The Kingdom is the beginning and the end of the Gospel. How can we account for the singular phenomenon that with the progress of Christianity, the Church has increased and the Kingdom of God has declined? The pious assumption that the Church represents the Kingdom of God in process or that the Church realises on earth the Kingdom of God does not bear serious scrutiny. We know the Church, its history and achievement. Even the eye of faith may not see the resemblance between the Church and the Kingdom. The Church of Rome has sprung from the Roman State. The Protestant Church owes its existence to democratic states. The political parentage of the Church is so apparent that any suggestion of its divine origin hardly fails to provoke the mild amuse-

ment of historians. Christianity took the wrong gradient when it left the Kingdom of God for the Church. The supplanting of the Kingdom of God by the Church may indeed be cited as an instance in which the religion of Christ happens to be quite the reverse of the object and aim of its founder. In a sense, the loss was immeasurable. The Kingdom of God like the Kingdom of nature is a nursery of life. Nature is life, in all its forms and variety. The Church has always been an organisation. The Kingdom of God was intended to inaugurate a new order of existence, while the Church at best reflects ordinary human nature in its heroic and loving moods and at its worst, the tiger and the leopard in man. In the Church we miss the grand cosmic sweep of the Kingdom of God, the prolific plenitude of a new life. The Church represents an army, the Kingdom of God a new race. So profoundly has history diverted the fundamental purpose of Christ in this matter that the recovery of the Kingdom of God as an essential feature of Christianity seems to be the urgent demand of our age. If the Indian Church has any preappointed task, it is to recover the Kingdom of God as a vital term of Christianity. This involves the reinstalment of Jesus as the Lord of a new universe, instead of the absent pontiff of the Church. The great *refusal* which the Indian Christian has to make is to reject the interloper and restore the heir.

There was no Church in the Jewish religious economy. The temple resembled our Kalighat more than anything else with this difference that instead of an idol they had a box in which or around which the glory of God was believed to rest. Neither the priest nor the worshippers were organised into a society. The temple did not formulate the doctrine nor hound to death the heretic though occasionally it stoned the impious, more often the prophet. The synagogue was merely a chapel where the law was expounded. Nobody demanded a confession of faith or the creed from the worshipper. The church among the Jews never carried the message of God to the world. The prophets at least carried the mandate of God to his people. The Jewish temple did not belong to the same realm as the modern Church. The attitude of Jesus to the temple was the most surprising of all. He contemplated its destruction without much regret. Most of his denunciations were reserved for the temple priests. He called the temple a den of thieves. The reply to the Samaritan woman that God will be worshipped thereafter in spirit

and truth indicates an era of spiritual worship as opposed to temple or church worship. He did not expect or desire that the Church should succeed the temple. He seems to have looked forward for a worship which far from being the theatrical display of the urge of adoration as developed in the temple and the Church—was really an entry into the inner realms of personality of man and God. He doubtless promised to be present where two or three of his disciples assembled in his name and to grant whatever they may agree to ask. He commanded them to go and preach. But none of these sayings had any institutional implications.

Indeed in the world of ideas in which our Lord moved and expected his followers to move, there was no place for a Church. The Father was an intimate reality to Jesus and He Himself expected to be always with His followers. The Holy Spirit was the inner resident of the Christian. With the living God in you and about you, how can there be any room for a temple or a church? In the picture of heaven portrayed by John in the Revelation, there was no temple, presumably no church, for God was the temple of it (Rev. 21: 22). The church and the temple came into existence only when men missed the living presence of God. We do not pray to Gods who live with us. We cannot invoke God who is present. The early disciples had no thought of a Church when the Master lived—not even after his death when they were led by the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit became a distant reality and then a dogma, when Jesus went to heaven and did not return, we thought of a church and built one.

#### THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH

The opposition to a reversion to the medieval type of 'Church' which sets up absolute claims such as the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches do, arise partly from political, partly from religious considerations. Protestantism still regards Luther as the hero of liberation, and emancipation from Rome as something to be thankful for. Movements that set their face towards Rome have the appearance of surrendering the liberty of conscience and freedom of faith achieved at tremendous cost. Political misgivings are probably deeper. The medieval Church has been the bulwark of monarchy. The chosen of the Lord always supported the anointed of the Lord. At a time when dictators are cropping up everywhere,

the fear that a medieval Church may prove an enemy of democracy cannot be treated as chimerical. In Spain and Russia, we have seen the Church opposing democracies. Dr. Kraemer who discerns a spiritual danger in the rise of dictators has not felt even a premonition of a possible calamity in the conjunction of two *pseudo* absolutes—the Church and the dictatorships—for the liberties which Christ has achieved for men.

In India, the rejection of a Church which seeks to substitute itself for Christ rests on spiritual rather than political grounds. For a long time to come humanly speaking—Hinduism will be the dominant factor in India and the Church cannot be a dangerous rival. Nor has India any historical traditions linking it with the spiritual battles between Rome and Protestantism. In India, on purely national grounds, we do not want to encourage religions having trans-Indian loyalties. We should not in national interests encourage Islam which looks to Turkey or Egypt as its spiritual mother or a Roman Catholic community which professes allegiance to Rome or petty communities with sentimental affections strewn all over Europe and England and America. In the larger national life, we have been endeavouring to bring into existence a democratic order: We cannot tolerate opposing forces planted in our religion—in the form of a Church with monarchical traditions. The Church, however, for a long time to come fortunately cannot be a national influence.

The Indian Christian discards the Catholic type of the 'Church' not because it is alien, but because with its spirit and form, he has an intimate acquaintance in Hinduism. In Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is held to be the actual incarnation of Buddha. In the Vallabhachari Sect, the priest represents Sri Krishna and is venerated as God. Among Khojas, I understand, that the High Priest can give permits for a seat in heaven. The worship of saints and the veneration of relics occur quite as widely in Hinduism and Islam as in Catholicism. There are many among Hindus whose faith in sacraments, can hardly be rivalled by the devotion of Catholics to the Eucharist. Exalting the Church over its founder, raising the priest to the pedestal of God, are forms of lunacy not unknown to Hinduism. The sanity of Hinduism—in its more exalted forms, has ruled out all these as pathological. Why should the Christian accept such folly in the name of Christ, while he discarded it as a Hindu? Much that passes for spiritua-

lity in certain Christian churches can easily be recognised as the recrudescence of cruder forms of paganism. The Indian Christian with his great heritage may be trusted not to barter his liberty for new religious slavery. Hinduism and Jesus bid him to stand by his freedom.

The Protestant has no doubt a greater appeal to the Indian Christian. The sturdy sense of the individual, vigilant guardianship of the freedom of conscience, and the liberty of opinion, repugnance to superstition, opposition to priest-craft are welcome and fit in with the spiritual mood of the Christian. Yet it may be doubted whether the Indian in the Christian will ever find a natural habitat therein. One essential quality the Indian Christian misses in the Protestant Church is the spirit. Doctrine occupies a too prominent place to permit the growth of the spirit. Its severe rationalism, though in a sense congenial, cannot develop the finer qualities of the soul. The sense of the invisible, the contact with the energising spiritual power, has always been an invariable element in our conception of Religion. Indian Christians when they are capable of introspection will certainly feel that one fundamental defect in the Church in the West lies in the inescapable feeling that you are not *en rapport* with the spiritual world in which God, Jesus, angels live. To recover the vital sense of the invisible will be the immediate concern of the Christian in India. Nor can he easily accept the illogical assumption of Protestantism that the Church is in any sense essential to Christian life. We in India like to work out fundamental principles to their logical consequences. The Protestant seems to lack courage to work out his convictions in all their implications.

India will regard the Church as a useful human institution for the threefold purpose of worship, fellowship, and propagation. The talk of the Church being a divine society seems to be more a claim than a demonstrable fact. The claim cannot add to Christian prestige, or status. Even in its utilitarian aspects, the Church may not receive the same high value as in the West. Church worship receives exaggerated importance because in many countries and societies, no other worship exists. The traditions in India have always nurtured family devotions. The household was a temple, the father the priest. A sad feature of Christian life is the decline of the worship at home. One way of

redressing the balance would be to restore the family shrine. That the Church should be the sole place of worship points to the losing importance of the family. This should not be. Even as a fellowship, the utility of the Church may be qualified. The Christian finds his fellowship in society more than in the Church. A meeting once a week just for an hour cannot promote the growth of fellowship. Fortunately Indian life has not become modern enough to fail to give social satisfaction. The Church does not really function as a strong fellowship. Certain Bhakti cults have emphasised the importance of *Satsang*—that is fellowship, and the belief in Sangha forms part of Buddhist creed. Nevertheless, neither Hinduism nor Buddhism insists on these institutions as essential for spiritual growth.

The Church has always been regarded as an important organ for propagation. One can easily see its place in worship. One may exaggerate its utility for fellowship. The belief that without the Church, the missionary cause will suffer has its justification only on the financial side. In the West, the Church supplies the mechanism for collecting funds for the missionary cause and thus an intimate association has grown up between the Church and Christian propaganda. A wider study of religious history does not substantiate the prevailing opinion. In Judaism, the temple was never the missionary centre. Our Lord refers to the Pharisee's zeal in proselytism. There must have been some measure of missionary activity associated with the temple. But when closely examined, it will be found that the function of carrying the message of God to people pertained to the prophet rather than to the priest. To Jonah came the clear call to be a missionary to Ninevities. Though on rare occasions the voice of God was heard in the temple as in the case of Samuel and Zachariah, the vision and the angel came to men in other walks of life. Prophets meet God in life and not in the temple. The temple was primarily a place of worship. Religion spread from man to man—from chosen messengers to the people. The prophets were never an institution. The school of prophets was a failure. They were too independent to be harnessed to church membership. The spirit moved calling a man here, commissioning a man there, thus opening channels for conducting the message. All this movement was free and not a function of any institution. The wonder in Asiatic Religions is the way in which spirit operates

on men and women producing an unity of purpose and design without any visible mechanism to direct the operations.

In Hinduism, there was always a good deal of inter-sect propaganda and conversion. The temple was never the recognised organ of such propaganda. Souls who caught the inspiration of a new faith kindled hearts even without conscious effort and these carried the message far and wide. The three Acharyas—Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa—spread their creeds all over India without any organised band of preachers. Spiritual contagion—not conscious propaganda—was the real missionary. It was literally true in India that people caught religion just as they caught cold. No injunction was laid on the disciple to preach. At a certain stage, the 'movement' precipitated into an organised body, then a caste. In a sense, the Church arrested the process of expansion. Once a caste was formed, there was an end to the movement. This should be a warning to us. Religion in India propagated itself in waves, but once disciples are gathered and banded, the power ceased. The movement, the Church, the caste—describe the curve of religion, its height and decline. The Western way of thinking that organisation strengthens the forces of propagation was never true in India. Once you organised the preacher, and he preached, you cried halt to progress. Buddhism had monasteries, but the monks were primarily a society for living a disciplined life. Though they helped propaganda, they did not come into existence for that purpose.

In the Acts, we have a conspicuous instance of a movement of life highly dynamic without any institutional support. The situation may be said to be unparalleled in religious history. The disciples were under the immediate command of the Holy Spirit who planned, directed, arranged. Every worker looked to the invisible spirit for orders and implicitly obeyed them. The directing agency was real enough and near enough to be consulted and was as much available as Jesus when he was in the body. The disciples threaded in and out, banded and disbanded, combined and separated—all the time working in union and precision—for the spreading of the Gospel. No visible institutions no concrete sources of power are to be found anywhere. Such was the vision of Jesus. If the Acts of Apostles gives us a picture of the state of things which Jesus desired, the place of the visible Church should be



taken by the invisible Holy Spirit. The Church as we know was not in the scheme of Jesus. It came into existence only when the Holy Spirit ceased to be a reality and the sense of his immediate direction evaporated. Here again the Indian experience was repeated. Can we actualise these conditions? Can this sense of the reality of the Unseen be made a permanent possession of the Christian? The Acts discloses a *modus operandi* which may be described as unique to Christianity—of disciples individually absorbing spiritual energy and converting themselves into live dynamos, then placing themselves under the orders of the Holy Spirit. All this was done without any visible and concrete institution like the Church. Such an experiment can be repeated only if the spiritual world is opened up to the Christian and becomes as much available as physical powers. The history of religion shows that such a contact can be attained permanently. This attainment may be said to be the true vehicle of Christianity. Even in Hinduism, in which individual realisation of unseen powers was not uncommon, we find no instance in which a body of persons were able to achieve this contact and utilise it for practical religious purposes. To perpetuate the conditions of the Acts of Apostle is to establish the true mechanism of Christianity by whatever name we call it.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA

Let us visualise the problem as it shapes itself in India. Jesus was not a natural phenomenon. He did not come and go away leaving a memory and a fragrance behind. He came with a purpose. He devoted his life to achieve it. His ambition for man was great—far beyond his dreams. He sought to make sinners—sons of God. He wanted to transform this universe, bound by the law of birth, growth and decay, into a universe of God, this limited life into eternal life. His was not a scheme of reform to perfect man and nature—to create a garden of Eden with a perfect man and woman. His was an attempt at a new creation—with a new cosmic power—hitherto not known to us. His rôle was that of a creator. Yet the means appear to be out of all proportion, inadequate to the end. His ministry lasted but three years. His disciples were only twelve. The Church and the State were against him. He was condemned and crucified before He established anything enduring. He made no plans for the future. He did not leave a single saying of

his in writing. He gave no commands. It may be doubted whether He instituted any sacraments or left any testament to his disciples. Far from asking them to follow the way of religions—to preach and teach, He interdicted them from moving forwards till they got the Holy Spirit. When he died, well might his disciples have thought that another dreamer had gone the way of his dreams. Yet two incidents brought hope. He rose from the dead. Hardly had the disciples finished rejoicing, He went away. The Holy Spirit came. The disciples began to feel the new power. Each disciple became a host in himself. Twelve fishermen possessing a charmed life act like Gods carrying everything before them. The implacable wrath of the High Priest and the frowns of the Roman Governors had no effect on them. Every obstacle was turned into a propeller. Put into jail, they came out. Threatened, they renewed their efforts. Chastised, they laughed. Banished, they spread the Gospel. Twelve fishermen conquered the world. Thomas came to India. Philip planted the seed in Africa. Paul set ablaze Europe. Of the twelve, eight were too many for the world. Three were sufficient. Yet success seemed to have defeated its own end. When Rome was conquered—itsself a miracle—the debacle came with unexpected suddenness. Conquered Rome, conquered Christianity. The weakness of life manifested itself in the hour of victory. The weakness was converted into strength. Hence the death of Christ and the birth of Christianity. When the disciple felt that Jesus was taken away, he had the consolation that in exchange he had the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit also left. The burning and consuming fires cooled and yet Rome has to be conquered. The Holy Spirit ebbed away and the world panorama unrolled itself. At first conversion was by the power of the Spirit. Peter who had no eloquence was as good as Paul who had both eloquence and scholarship. Thomas the Doubter was as good as Peter the Rock. The conqueror was not the disciple, but the Spirit. All the weapons in the intellectual armoury of Paul did not convert a single Jew. The mighty Spirit achieved where human power failed. When the Holy Spirit receded, we were left with preaching without power, with the preacher without contagion. We had the armour, but not the strength to bear it.

For the second time the crisis came when the Christian confronted Rome. The first crisis was when the disciple con-

fronted the priest. How was the situation saved? How did Christianity conquer Rome and Europe? By a victory which was really a defeat. Christ triumphed by the very rejection of the power He sent. The early Christians found in Rome an answer to their prayer. Here was a mighty empire. Its Emperors were worshipped as Gods. Its Empire was marvellous, moulding nations into a disciplined whole. Roman law was the glory of the ancient world. What was the secret of Rome's power? Its government, self-reliance, courage, indomitable will were marshalled and controlled by men of wisdom and strength—the rulers. Here was a power which the Christian could use as well as the Roman. What if the Holy Spirit was lost?—All was not lost. For the first time, the disciple looked to the State for inspiration and got it. From that day, it was all Church government. It was all discipline and drill: it was the army and the march. The very language of faith changed. Jesus was the King of Kings; Heaven a City of God; the Christian a soldier; the Bishop, captain of the soul. Christianity triumphed by the spirit of Rome. Rome rose out of its ruins as the Church of Rome. The Roman Empire was reincarnated in the Church. The Roman soldier—reborn in the Christian fighter. Stephen died in a trance filled with Holy Spirit, the vision of Christ before him. The martyrs died as soldiers do—with defiance on their lips and contempt in their looks. What course Christianity would have taken if it first met its crisis in Greece instead of in Rome is an interesting speculation. The Church then was in a sense the death and resurrection of Christianity. Its death as a vision in the mind of Jesus—as a religion of divine power; its resurrection as an earthly power. The Sons of God ceased to be henceforward: the Church produced heroes and super-men.

Two ways were open to the Christian—one to recapture the Holy Spirit, the other to capture the spirit of Rome. He chose to establish the Empire of Christ in the same sense in which there was an Empire of Rome. The Church has achieved this by a twofold obscuration. It detracted the attention of the Christian from the experiment of life to an experiment of organisation. It turned from the mysteries of rebirth to the technique of repentance, from the strength of new life to the power of discipline, from eternal life to rejuvenated life. The sense of God as a director of human affairs left the Church. The Holy Spirit as a resident power was

abandoned. Christ who came down to earth, we sent back to heaven. He wanted to be always with us. We want him to be on the right hand of God. God called himself Emmanuel. We called him Father in 'heaven.' The subversion of Christianity was complete. The Church then started on a new vision of conquest—with Christian soldiers. So long as we think of Christian expansion in terms of soldiers and conquest, we require a Church which can drill and discipline and officers who will lead us to the battlefield.

To the Christians of India at the threshold of Christian life, the same problem presents itself. Great India like the Roman Empire stands before them. How shall we bring her to Christ? Shall we bring her to the Church man by man, community by community? Shall we have evangelistic campaigns, with the battle song 'Onward Christian Soldiers Marching As to War'? Shall we temper our will with the zeal of Jain and the fury of the Semitic? Shall we organise into a Church? Shall we become a community and seek for political power?—the same old crisis—the same old temptation. Shall we accept the Churches and establish an Empire of Christ? or Shall we recapture the Holy Spirit? Shall we invoke back Christ to the scenes of his life and death? Shall we again bring back to men the sense of the reality of God and Jesus? Shall we make God available? Shall we take up again the thread of life that broke on the threshold of the West? Shall we catch the stream before it bifurcated into the Western and Eastern and work out the way of the Holy Spirit? The Church has ruined our Lord's experiment, got Him success in a way He least desired. We tremble before the Church. We pray for strength to pass by it. We want Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God. We want to be the Sons of God.

This is the hour of crisis and challenge. How shall we answer? The spirit of Christ, the spirit of Hinduism prompts us in the same direction. If we go by the way of the West, we need a Church, a strong and powerful Church, an universal Church. We need Church Unions. Should we chose the other way, we leave the Church to those who need an institution for worship. Hinduism always felt that a temple with ritual, hypnotism and illusion will be required for 'subs'—sub Hindus. There will be many among us who are intellectually undeveloped. They need a High Church. Many who are

intellectually normal ; they need the Protestant Church. But those who seek to realise the vision of our Lord, need no Church, high or low. They need to escape from it. Our immediate task is experiment and there are a thousand problems of Christian life for us to solve—the Holy Spirit, the mystery of rebirth, the recovery of the power of resurrection, the discovery of eternal life, the experience of being in Christ Christ being in us. Our Church shall be a school of research in Christian genetics. Our Church shall be a personality charged with divine energy which can be made to permeate the whole structure of Hinduism. Our need is not an army, but a spiritual atmosphere which a Hindu can respire. The Church can hardly help us. Shall we take courage and plunge in the other way that beckons us to Christ? We are young and the greatness of the task, if it unnerves us, also thrills us. Is the task too much for us? Any way, we can dare and do. The ashram was born in the days of spiritual experiment in India. It has done great things in the past and present. Our political regeneration came through Sabarmathi Ashram, our educational regeneration through Shantiniketan. Our sciences are borne in the ashrams of Bose and Raman. Our spiritual regeneration will come out of an ashram. Ashrams will be—if we need a name and a label—the precursor of the Christian Church in India. To it all the vital energies of the Christian life will be transferred. It is not for us to look at the distant scene. It is for us to surrender to the Lord and march forward in his name and leave success to the Lord. So said Geetha. So says the Gospel. If as we contemplate the prospect we feel we are on the Mount of Transfiguration and see Jesus in company with the figure of the genius of the Hinduism—do we behold a vision or like Peter talk not knowing what we say?

## CHAPTER V

### THE CHURCH

BY V. CHAKKARAI

The religious situation in India is without a parallel either in the ancient world of the Graeco-Roman Empire which was the theatre of the apostolic Church, or in the modern world of Europe where religion is relegated to a back seat. Religion, in its various forms and main diversions, exists and functions. In one word, the dominant position in Indian life is still held by religion against the besieging forces of modernism. Religion has not yet been dislodged from its primacy nor disentangled from its web of complex relations. The quest of the Absolute is still pursued with indomitable ardour in lonely hermitages and lowly huts. It is still an adventure, as full of thrills as the attack on Gowri Shankar, Mount Everest. The pilgrims still toil up the ascent to meet Him, the passionless, the serene, and the eternal. Reminded of the one thing needful in the midst of the pursuit of power, pleasure, and self, busy men who have toiled in the crowded marts, return to meditate. This ancient urge to leave the muddy stream and float away into the mighty ocean, has in the midst of the fever and fret and frenzy, perhaps, of politics, been distorted into the now familiar phenomenon of communalism. This is the paradox of the Indian religious life. While religion seeks to divert men from selfish aims, it has become to-day the centre of warring politicians and the rallying cry of rival propaganda. Not to dilate more on this theme, we can say that it is in this baffling arena that the Church has to carry on its tasks. Hence, a different conception of the Church and its tasks.

Here no attempt will be made to repeat the lessons learnt from Western teachers nor even to translate them into the Indian dialects. The natural and spontaneous thoughts of an Indian will be set down here. Agree they may or not with the ideas that have been introduced here. But even Western Missions do not care to be reminded of their own heritage but anxious they are and must be to understand the Indian reactions to Christianity and his tribute

to its genius. In religion as well as in politics, the international situation is having its effects on the Indian mind. And yet the national situation claims our first loyalty. Theories and theologies, confessions and creeds, Catholic and Protestant, Puritan and sacerdotal—these and other opposites, as the Gita calls them, can fan into flames the smouldering fires of ancient feuds in the West. Compromises are attempted between them in conferences where hope rises to undreamt heights from which the reunion of Christendom is dimly perceived. As is only natural, the Indian admires these experiments from a respectable distance. But his heart turns homeward like that of the traveller. His home is India and its problems and peoples are his own. And if Christ the Lord means anything at all, He means something surely here and now. What does He mean here and now to us? This is the question we shall try to answer.

#### HANDICAPS FOR THE INDIAN CHURCH

While this is so, the Indian Christian still remains in bondage, a safe slavery where he can toil without thought. The imagination and heart have not yet been roused from their slumber. They are overlaid by the traditionalism of the West. In the main, theory and practice are of the evangelical tradition of the early nineteenth century, with its good and evil. A holy egotism is the passion of the preacher. Theology, if there be such in the Indian Church, rotates round this. The Church is to minister to a mind diseased within the prescribed limits. Even here, as will be readily seen, both theology and the Church leave behind great tracts of the personal life. They concentrate on a few sins. Piety is cultivated. There is no depth, no intensity, and no passion. Even from this narrow evangelical tradition of the early missionaries, the fire is slowly dying, though the ashes are still hot. That is all.

It is under the shadow of churches of this type that we live. No wonder that creative thinking is impossible in their midst. It is a positive danger to the individual to exert his mind, for, if he is a mission subordinate, he will be in danger of judgment. He may have to lose his only means of livelihood. How many intelligent minds of whom there are an increasing number in the churches, are capable of such sacrifice? Again, the prestige of Western ecclesiasticism and its power of money are adverse to independence. Seminaries are

manned by teachers who are intoxicated by the wine of the older systems. New recruits from Western seminaries with the fervour of sectarian confessions, invade the churches and theological colleges and impart the new doctrines of their churches. Hence, arise a new insistence on sacramentalism, the claims of the priesthood, and the negation of other churches. Mere verbal subtleties, instead of spiritual realities, permeate joint committees on Church Union and other religious conferences. In short, the atmosphere in most churches, throbs with this excitement. The Indian patiently submits to the religious exercises and either out-Herods Herod or dies of sheer mental fatigue.

But there is one aspect of this incessant subjection of the Indian mind that should receive particular notice. Mild doses of modernistic teaching have been given in higher theological institutes. That is, the liberal theology that minimises the supernatural and maximises the ethical and social elements in the evangel, has disturbed the even surface. Extreme modernism, whether of the Roman Catholic or Protestant variety, is kept out. Fear of consequences to what is called faith, is the sentinel, keeping off the the revolutionary modernism. Here and there questions are put regarding the foundations of religion, and above all, the relations of the Christian faith to non-Christian religions. The most revolutionary of recent interest in theology, the Barthian transcendentalism, has not yet shaken up the complacency of the churches and missionaries and pastors. Barthianism is the nearest approach to certain forms of Indian thought, though this is not yet perceived even by many of those who hold the Barthian view. The free discussion of fundamentals is not encouraged. The mere informational side of education is uppermost. Here we meet with a paradox in Christian evangelism that must strike every observer who watches. On the one hand, the Christian evangelist, be he an Indian or a Westerner, calls on non-Christians to give up age-long traditions and beliefs and practices. They should free themselves from their bondage—a revolution is sought to be effected in their thinking and modes of life. But when they come into the church, they are caught in a different net. Customs and practices of Western churches should not be challenged, denominational loyalties are to be respected: a halo of sanctity is thrown round conceptions of the sacraments; and the uniform traditions of Western churches are not to be given up. That is, Indian



Christians must cease to think, or think, if at all, within the space allotted. This is an one-sided bargain that cannot long be upheld. It must break down. For the free spirit that challenges Eastern thought cannot long be withheld from doing the same to Western ecclesiastiasm.

To sum up, to any one coming from the West, with a keen interest in Christianity, the Indian Churches will present no new features with which he is not familiar in churches in the homeland. The Indian churches will be but pale replicas. They cannot open out to him any new vistas into unknown regions of Christian experience. Ecclesiastical architecture, dress, music, rites, ceremonies, and thought, will be echoes, strong or feeble as the case may be, of Western religious life. There was no conscious fault on the part of the early missionaries when they planted the banner of the only Christianity they knew which they took to be the absolute. Nor can their modern successors get rid of the same complex. Here lies the tragedy, for it is the tragedy of training and character against an alien environment. Adaptation is difficult, if not impossible.

#### WESTERN CIVILIZATION

There is one another aspect of missionary enterprise in India that is not sufficiently borne in mind and that the non-Christian critic sees with painful acuteness. He sees Christian missions as outposts of Western imperialism: the word Western is used advisedly, for to him there is no difference between the Britisher and any other Westerner. Besides, in practice, missions of whatever Western nationality, have also tended to hang together. It cannot be doubted that as a matter of history the expansion of mission work has synchronised with the growth and increase of the British Empire. This was, of course, an unfortunate accident. It is being overruled by Providence. But it certainly gave to the Western missionary a curious sense of superiority; and the sense of conquest, found in the natural man, found full play in his contact with and control of the Indian mind. This is very unlike what St. Paul must have felt when he stood on Mount Areopagus and delivered his sermon on the Unknown God. He must have realised the beauty, magnificence and learning of Athens, though he must have felt that His Lord was over them all. Though a Jew he was, it is to be hoped that he was cosmopolitan enough to understand that Greece was dowered by God with gifts that might be

used in the service of his Master. Here it was otherwise. Everything Indian was unworthy, though such a feeling could not have come to the missionary from the Lord. And everything Western was worthy, though there were not wanting men and women in the middle of the nineteenth century in the West and later on who levelled keen shafts at Western social and economic life, both from the Christian and scientific points of view.

Times have changed and Macaulay is no longer a safe guide in the assessment of Indian culture and religions. But *pari passu* with the growing appreciation of Indian life and thought, there has gone on a process of disillusionment in respect of Western life. Both these new valuations have brought changes in the estimate of Christianity. Two things were easily mistaken as Christianity, rather as true manifestations of it, viz.: Western civilisation of the nineteenth century and Western religion. To-day Christianity is seen as distinct from Western civilization; and as regards its distinctiveness from Western religion, the two are not identified to the same extent as twenty or thirty years ago was the case. However, the contents of the Christian Revelation, as it is called, have yet to be gathered by the Indian mind. The strong position that Western Christianity still occupies in the churches, its long possession and human inertia still stand in the way of a right knowledge. In passing, a note of caution should here be given—that in trying to reach a knowledge of the evangel for ourselves, it is not meant to discredit Western forms of the faith. Hostility to them is not our attitude at all. Rather, we are waiting to see what the Lord has to give to us. The Samaritans, in the first instance, followed the woman of the five husbands. When they saw Him, they had first hand knowledge, dispensing with the woman's. Even so, we require to know Him or rather to be known of Him without the intermediation of any system, much less a system that is foreign to us. Even if we had a system of our own, that would not be a substitute for the Truth, as it is in Him. Here as in other spheres of religious knowledge the distinctions of Indian thought may be usefully applied. With regard to the knowledge of God: There is *para* and *apara gnanam*. The latter comes first in the order of enquiry, consisting of philosophical knowledge based on the scriptures. Then comes *para gnanam*, which is direct knowledge of the *Brahman*, initiated according to the Saiva school by a *guru* who is regarded as in some sense the Lord Himself.

To-day in the Indian Churches, the great need is for men and women who have attained such knowledge.

In this place we should try to unseat the deep-rooted notion that Christianity is identical with or is best manifested by Western civilization. At one time, within our own memory, the best defence of Christianity was the world-wide supremacy of Western races. They were the lords of the world and the lordship over non-Western races was given by God for their fidelity to the Christian faith. The British Empire was regarded and is still so regarded, though not with the same assurance, as the modern theocracy and its statesmen the prophets of a later dispensation. It is our earnest desire that not only should such extravagance be banished from apologetics, but its subtle influence on the missionary mind be directly combated. Such a result cannot be achieved, we fear by displays of religious and even cultural values by Indians, but by the establishment of political independence, involving what is admired most, the modern accessories of war. Even such a consummation will have become a reality before the lapse of a decade from now. Christianity in a free India will have to put on a new face and speak in a different voice and accent. The mind and imagination will be set free and such freedom will give originality and daring to our thought.

The above is a long plea for occupying new ground, turning our backs on the old, that is passing away. In the many debates going on now, the Church, its place and functions in Christianity, have come to the forefront. It cannot be avoided; though it is suggested that this preoccupation with the church idea is an echo of the controversies of the West. Everywhere, at Lausanne, Edinburgh and Lambeth, the Church looms large. The many theories of Western theologians and churches are being republished in modern guise. Points of approximation are being sought with assiduity. All these are taking place with Church Union or Reunion in view. In all these conferences, the Western religious mind is seeking a way out of the quagmire into which the churches have fallen. Besides, we cannot help thinking that in the history of Western Christianity, concentration on the church idea is in proportion to the lack of real faith in the Lord. When the divine idea of unity in Him—and where else can it be found?—fades away, the human idea of church

unity takes its place. Not finding or indifferent to this spiritual unity, the human mind in the churches seeks a unity, composed of dogmas and institutions. Of this phenomenon, the Indian is keenly conscious; and it is therefore apathetic to problems affecting church loyalties. The mind and faith and love should be directed to Him who is above all system which have their day and cease to be. He alone is the great Reconciler.

Here the Indian mind is in striking contrast to that of Western Christianity, trained for centuries in the polemics of church formulas and hair splitting distinctions and traditional laws. It leaves them all behind and goes to Him who is undivided, the One without a second. Therefore, He is the alpha and omega of Indian Christianity. The Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, is not before Him not even after Him. Like John the Forerunner, the church must decrease and He must increase. A curious development, —though on consideration of certain qualities of Western churches, it ceases to be curious—has shown itself in recent times. That is the exaltation of the Church over the Lord. This view has received terrible emphasis in Roman Catholic modernism which asserts that the Church created the Lord; and the gospel and the Christ are the unconscious products of the Church's religious longing. The parallel to it is Feuerbach's argument that all the essential doctrines of Christianity, including that of God, are the externalisation of human needs and longings. This vast subjectivism has invaded the churches; hence the subtle humanism of the Church, standing between man and his Lord; or even monopolising the religious field. The Lord is a mere idea, the age-long product of the Church's efforts, behind which she rules. This is not even theocracy but *anthropocracy*. Men have never fought for Him but for their own position and power in the mask of Him who disdained all power except His Father's.

#### CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH AND SCRIPTURES

The Indian mind, therefore, rejects these dangerous hallucinations and asserts the objective and transcendent reality of the Lord. This, however, is not openly challenged, and cannot be, as it will cut the very nerve of religion. A Christianity without Christ as an independent other, is a sham and a snare. In full recognition of this simple fact, it is sought to instal

the Lord in the churches as an indwelling One and identify the Church's institutional activities with Him. We cannot worship the immanent Christ of the churches, but worship Him who must be obeyed who does not constrain obedience. In this sense, it is asserted here that Christianity of the kind that history has seen after the time of the apostles cannot exist without the Church. Gibbon, in his description of the secondary causes of the rapid extension of Christianity in the Roman Empire, saw with his usual acumen that the episcopal order was one of them. That is true, and the truth of it is even truer than he evidently thought. But cannot the Lord exist without the Church and carry on His work? Surely the audacity that can deny this, is sublime but is infected with utter disloyalty to Him. And even so thought the Jews of His day who could not understand that the Kingdom of God could become a reality, leaving them out in utter darkness. St. John of the Desert proclaimed the essential fact that God could out of the stones there raise children unto Abraham. The Jews rejected the counsel of God and made themselves God—a position that history has repudiated. Even so to-day, challenges and counter-challenges are being issued by churches for their respective merits; piety in the churches puts on the garb of Christian conscience that is too delicate to communicate with men of other communions. To the question, therefore, whether Christianity can function in the world without the Church, we give an emphatic affirmative answer. The Lord can raise many churches and saints out of the peoples of the world. The apostle said that the treasure of his gospel was in earthen vessels, the apostles and men of his day. Yes, the earthen vessels will break and are meant to be broken at the fountain and the eternal Potter can turn other equally good vessels on his mysterious wheel. In India it is not possible for the Church to make the claims made for it in the West; much less make them good in the face of the instinctive Indian attitude and history. We shall see within what limits the church idea will receive recognition here; but suffice it to say that the Church is not an extension of the Incarnation, nor a substitute for Christ, acting in His place till He comes.

Quite on a par with the above, are the views that as the Church formed the canon of the New Testament, therefore, the Church is superior to it and is the only true interpreter of them. Is it possible that in India such a contention can

be advanced? The Scriptures are the Word of God. We do not want here to discuss in what sense they are His Word; and as such they are above the Church and above the prophetic office of the Church. To the Scriptures, to the law and the testimony we go. The theologians of India and her dialecticians reasoned and debated on the Vedas and Upanishads and other sacred writings. But they never claimed to be above Holy Writ. Holy Writ is eternal and unchangeable as the *Brahman* and remains so from age to age. So much was Holy Writ esteemed above the particular systems of theologians that the very words carried potency according to an ancient school. The claim made by some churches in the West that they had the authority, divine and exclusive, to interpret the Scriptures, is rejected in India, though the sacerdotal caste and the other twice born castes pretended to have the exclusive privilege. In the Christian churches, no such claim can prevail nor does it prevail. The Bible is open to all believers and is being interpreted to-day, as it is being done by different sects in the West. Divergent interpretations have been and are given to certain passages, though sometimes in literal narrowness, and often in too broad a sense. Doctrines and practices condemned by the powerful churches are taking root and are a constant source of disturbance in the well-established churches. Extravagances there may be and are, but this freedom is essential, and is in line with the Indian catholic genius. In the interpretation of Holy Writ, India prefers the mystical to the logical, the spiritual to the historical. So much in brief for the place of the Christian Vedas in the Indian Churches.

#### WESTERN FEATURES AND THE INDIAN MIND

Before proceeding to say what in the Indian environment the church can be, we shall here mention some characteristics of Western churches that must strike any Indian student. (1) Organisation, elaborate and tapering to the higher powers from the lower, is of the very essence. Committees, Councils, Synods, and Assemblies are indispensable (2) Uniformity is insisted to the degree that any departure is regarded as heretical and schismatical and denounced (3) Dogmatic tests and particular forms and rites are essential, though in varying degrees of rigidity. Intercommunion is out of place between churches thus organised (4) Continuity is necessary; changes are frowned upon; and external forms are regarded as of

primary importance. (5) The churches have been closely mixed with the States, and have followed in their train, especially the churches under the power of the State. They have given support to the powers that be and resisted in many instances popular movements. Conservatism and alliance with the governing castes have eaten into the very life of great ecclesiastical bodies. To take one instance, from many, as Macaulay said, the political history of England cannot be understood apart from its church history, and *vice versa*. Such an alliance has often led to the suppression of the Christian ethics, its place being taken by political expediency and aggrandisement. Such are some of the features of Western churches and with them the Indian cannot be in real sympathy, simply because they are alien to his history and environment. The forms of offices and dignities that have been planted on Indian soil cannot grow as in the West. They will either remain stunted shrubs, or die without putting forth fruits.

To the above characteristics the Indian mind, when it reflects, cannot offer hospitality. The emphasis on elaborate organisation is out of place. Uniformity has never been the aim of religion in India. There are more forms of Hinduism than there are churches and sects in the West. Catholicity is interpreted differently. The West means by it that the same forms prevail over the habitable globe. Here it means diversity with unity of spirit. The idea of authority regulating worship and doctrine which hangs like a black pall over Western churches, is here very feeble. This has been the strength more than the weakness of Hinduism. In the classification of systems, too, the theologians of the Sivite Siddhanta, for instance, in the Tamil country, have graded them. In the centre is the inner orthodox; then the outer orthodox; then the inner heterodox; and the outer heterodox. This classification does not deny the right of any of them to be called Hindu. It is, however, when we come to the attitude of churches to governments that intense antagonism is expressed. There is a general feeling both among Christians and non-Christians that the churches, popes, archbishops and bishops are not the custodians of the Lord's *dharma* but camp followers of worldly statesmen. The churches in every country support the war policies and aggressions of their governments. This *scandalam magnum* is the great apostasy, and almost disenfranchises the churches in our

estimation. No doubt this unholy alliance is even defended. At the least, a discreet silence should have sealed the lips of church dignitaries. This phenomenon has appeared in Japan where to-day the Japanese churches are on the side of the terrible barbarities perpetuated by Japan's militarists in China. The world passes on without paying attention to the church's message, enshrined in dogma and worship, because it knows that they are stricken with paralysis. The lead in international efforts for peace and against imperialistic robberies, has been assumed by forces lying beyond the frontiers of the churches. These peace conferences and societies may fail, but they are the bearers of the Christ ideal; they are the true witnesses to the heavenly *dharma*. In India we do not want to repeat the tragedy of the churches of the West. There is to-day an awakening and a stir among us. The war by the cunning and craft of the world is not to be opposed by the craft of the priest, with the wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove. This is a terrible position that cannot be redeemed by lifting the cross in the shambles of trenches and amidst the bombardment of open towns and the fumes of poisonous gases. The Church is in the world; and it is today of the world and has been in the past, of the world—the world fallen away from God.

What, then, do we find in the modern situation? The Church still claims that it has conquered the world, that is, by forming part of the world and adopting the spectacular tactics of the world's wisdom. With the loss of the sense of its world-overcoming faith, the church has gone for imposing ceremonial; it has drawn itself into the inner sanctuary of the altar. The church organ peals in glorious anthems drowning the war-cries of embattled hosts. The eloquence of the preacher cleverly turns aside from the dreadful apostacy. Processions and postures give a pleasing glow of piety. What more can be required to lull the soul of man in the arms of a safe salvation and waft it across the river to the eternal shores of individual bliss? G. K. Chesterton, that curious distortionist of Western history, speaking of the Anglo-Catholic revival in England, says that contrary to the expectation of its enemies that predicted the end of the Church, it has risen. "But it seemed like a convulsion in nature that the Archbishop instead of losing his head should be looking for his mitre; and that instead of diminishing the respect due to parsons we should strengthen it to the respect due to priests." All this is very



grand, but who is interested in the Archbishop's mitre and the respect due to priests? We are far more interested in the fact that the Church's impotence is so glaring to day in the matter of witnessing against predatory warfare. The explanation is obvious. The church is no longer what is called the Body of Christ; but it is the body of the national mind, that is, of the politicians who guide national policies. The religion of the state has in every country of the West (the same is true of Japan) has displaced the religion of Jesus Christ. This is not confined to Germany and Italy.

It may be said in answer that the Church (we mean by the church, the churches), has its long roll of saints—but what is even more important, the thousands of men and women who live in the Lord, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And in her ministry are holy men who truly serve the Lord. These are they who carry on the visible apostolic success. But what can these do against the dominant forces of nationalism? Their witness is feeble, if they witness at all, or they let the world go on its way. It may be further suggested that in the event of political *swaraj* materialising soon, the Indian Church itself may be so carried away over the national cataract that it may lend its support to unchristian policies. True. Such a danger is immanent in the national spirit, and if the Indian Church succumbs to it, to that extent it will be a betrayal of its Master. In one word, the church militant no longer exists.

We are to be grateful to the churches of the West, instead of being critical. Their missions have created the churches in India; their agents live in strongholds of the land. Their schools and colleges, their hospitals and churches are a witness to the love they bear to the Lord. None can usefully deny all these; but here we are on the subject of the historical genius of the church of the West. This is how it strikes an Indian who is prepared to grant all that may be said about its piety, liberality and strenuous efforts. And yet the Indian mind as a whole has not responded to its call, not indeed as it has expected. The Lord works in many a soul unknown of missionaries, and in incalculable ways. There are problems raised by the rapidly moving trends of political government in India, practical and religious, that will be discussed by others in this series. But our view is that the nature, constitution, and functional organs of the Indian Church will be

very different ; and that, in the very nature of things, they cannot but be different. Let us begin to grasp this.

In India, religions, except Christianity (and even Christianity is really no exception) are communities. The word community does not connote the same thing in India as in America. In India the community is the largest religious society, which the State has recognised as a political whole. *It is the church.* And as there are three religions in India of the major type (excluding Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism), so they are three communities. In political matters, the life of the community is expressed in what is called communalism, the counterpart of the religious unity. It is in the midst of this unity that religious life manifests itself in diversified forms which hand on the religious deposit from generation to generation. The analogy of Israel will complete this meagre picture. The congregation of Israel was the church. The temple formed the centre ; and in the Lord's day the synagogues, the local congregations for worship and the reading of the law and the Prophets ; the schools were for training the teachers. There were pious groups who cherished the ancient hope ; there were the desert dwellers who pursued the secret way in isolation as in brotherhoods like the Essenes. All these and other forms were not knit together by any external law except the rite of circumcision. Such is the case in the religious community of Hinduism and Islam.

We shall refer only to the Hindu community as the example *par excellence*. It is a historical community with a hoary past as old as ancient Israel ; and Israel has gone, but it remains in undiminished vigour. Even the papacy is young when compared with it. Its ancient Scriptures were in existence before the Lord appeared, and Paul set foot in Rome. How does it manage to live and transmit its religious and social life ? We can attempt an answer, but it must be necessarily very brief. The family comes first, not the individual modern family but the old Hindu family. Religion and its observances are carried on in the home. There is no analogy to it in the so-called family prayer of the Christian. Recurrent religious festivals in the Hindu calendar take place in the home. The monthly and annual rites in connection with the dead are performed in the home with the aid of the family purohit, the priest. In all these, the women folk are as im-

portant as the men, and children are guided into the religious life. Leaving the home, we go to the temple. The old maxim of the old Tamil poetess is the very essence. Dwell not in a town where there is no temple. / Morning, noon and evening witness the performance of poojas to which worshippers can go or not as they are minded. Then there are the monthly and annual festivals—celebrated with all the pomp and pageantry which is so dear to the eye. There are the far-famed temples to which pilgrimages are made from the north to the south, east and west. There are the sacred rivers that wash away the bathers' sins. The *mutts*, or monasteries, presided over by celibates who trace their spiritual descent from God, are in charge of different schools of theology. There are the wandering *sadhus* and *sannyasis*. There are the expounders of the ancient mythologies and epics. There are the modern Hindu religious movements that minister to the reformed Hindu mind. Time will fail me to speak of other agencies and intangible influences that are found in the Hindu religious landscape.

It is not our purpose here to pass judgment on any of these. But here they are and have been for ages. What lessons can we draw from these? That Western church organisations are the only possible things, cannot be admitted. They are the products of other aims and circumstances. In the absence of any instructions of the Lord, the Indian mind, when it is free, as it is not free, will fashion forms for the maintenance and spread of Christianity, as the Lord directs in accordance with its natural genius. While it may absorb some elements from the West, it will transform them. Let us draw the picture of the Indian Church to be, though prophecy is sure to err. In Hinduism there is no central authority; it is not an authoritarian religion nor a totalitarian religion with a dictator. No church council or synod formulates or fulminates, though there must have been some attempts of that kind in the past. It is, therefore, inevitable that the Indian Christian religious community should look askance at authority in religion. In all that has been stated, we do not say anything of the Roman Church. A formal authority was not constituted by the Lord and in the New Testament. There is the authority of the spiritual that may degenerate into that of the formal. It is not possible to conceive of the Indian Church or community, organising itself into huge federations or even unions. The Indian David cannot fight in the

armour and with the sword of Saul. Simpler and more psychological forms of spiritual obediences will come into vogue, deriving their power not from commissions and holy orders and councils. There will be individual churches, managed by trustees and carrying on worship and preaching the Word according to varying forms and traditions.

To-day the ashram ideal has come to stay, though it is still struggling to find its real place in Christian life, and its administrative aspect leaves much to be desired. It is believed that an ashram should consist of celibates, but that is wrong. The ancient ashrams were mostly ruled by married teachers. The ideal of the monastic ashram came into existence under Buddhist influence, on the analogy of the Buddhist Sangham. Be this as it may, it is inevitable that the ashram should play an increasing role in spiritual life. Apart from social and philanthropic activities, the ashram will become the centre of spiritual life and religious education. Here a distinction will assert itself. An attempt is being made to bring the ashram under the Church, that is under the local bishop. It is true that the Roman Church and the Anglican Church exercise control over the monastic orders and convents through the Bishop: that is, the Church is the dominating entity and through its rulers should control every activity, be it educational, social or religious, lest it should claim equality with it. This is of course the process of centralisation with which we are familiar in Western Church politics; but this phenomenon will be unfamiliar here. The ashram will be an independent organ of the church, viz., of the Christian community, co-operating with other organs and contributing to the life of the whole. At present there is no independent agency which devotes itself entirely to religious life and theological activity. The individual church is to day meant more for giving the minimum; and if religious life in its intenser forms arises, they are the work of itinerant revivalists or of individual genius. Hence, the formation of groups for the deepening of spiritual life apart from the bigger organisation. True, some of these groups, as has been observed before, tend to extravagance and error. The emotional pitch is high and nerves are high-strung and the unmoved worshipper looks upon them with ill-concealed contempt. Enthusiasm in religion is outside the orbit of the regular churches, and is treated with displeasure. They are wandering comets that brush with their blazing tails the churches whose services are

regulated by prayers and postures at timely intervals; whose singing is very good but only has no heart in it. While I am not glancing with hostile eyes on stately worship and ceremonial, the tendency as to coldness and starched dignity, reminding one of the Anglican bishops who frowned on the enthusiasm of Wesley and his confederates, is visible. It is not possible to drill Indian nature with its varied types and temperaments into one pattern. Different groups, marked by strong emotional and mental features, must be left to produce their own forms of worship; and no obstacles should be placed in the way of such gatherings. That one form of worship and only one, should prevail from the north to the south, amidst a diversity of peoples, is a dream; nay, it is a night-mare. The true catholicity of Indian Christianity will make room for the widest and wildest diversities from the serenity of Quaker worship to the frenzied excitement of our *Vaishnava bhakti sankirtan* parties. A cold dull level of uniformity will never be welcome in India. The Churches and Union schemes that are tending in that direction will meet disaster and disappointment.

As has been observed before, the controversies regarding the Church have been as numerous as those concerning the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement, and what is more noteworthy, more bitter and prolonged. Broadly there is fundamental agreement regarding the latter in the Western churches in the midst of diversity of views. Such differences as there are, do not really divide the churches and forbid inter-communion which is what an Indian should expect, but here he meets with a puzzling paradox. While tolerating many conflicting views within the same church, on important questions of faith, on the constitution of the church and the ministry no difference is tolerated. This is the peculiar prerogative of the Anglican Church, the peculiar product of the English genius, suspicious of logic and sentiment in matters of external conformity. There is not an inconsiderable number of modernists in the Church of England, as the Archbishops' Report admits, who deny virtually the Virgin Birth of the Lord, the Resurrection of Jesus, and the historicity of many portions of Holy Writ, and yet they find shelter in her communion. This is no doubt congenial to the Anglican outlook, though the Indian would prefer agreement on the articles of faith to uniformity of church polity. The Indian attitude is even more

different, or rather will be so in future. Neither in the sphere of human formulas of the mysteries of faith nor in that of the orders of the church will we insist on uniformity. These things are really very much on the outside and agreement, wide and universal, cannot be expected nor even desirable. The only bonds of union will be and cannot but be found not in us but in the Lord. He it is that transcended our differences, even our evil as well as our good. If we cannot find our unity in Him, where else can we find it ?

### VISIBLE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

To find unity in the Lord, that is, His mind and the unfolding of His purpose, is too airy and transcendental, it may be said, and therefore, we want a visible unity, such as a visible church alone can furnish and no other entity can even in the spiritual sphere. Such is the contention of those who argue for one church, ruling over all. This is a dream, and a much less attractive dream than the discovery of our unity in the Lord whose we are. Here we propose to examine very briefly the ideas and ideologies of those among the Christians of the West over whom the visible church exercises a charm almost irresistible and even more so than the Lordship of Christ.

The outlines of this view are such as these ; Christ instituted a visible church, though the evidence for this initial proposition is so scanty as to turn out an argument for the opposite view, that He did not institute any church. At least, after His ascension, a church came into existence in Jerusalem; it followed apostolic preaching and guidance. Baptism was practised, and of what kind it is not clear. Yet these Jewish apostles and their followers followed with equal zeal the Jewish doctrines and the temple remained the centre of religious life. Soon, and as the years passed, other churches or groups arose as the result of apostolic evangelism in other parts of Palestine. Then the movement invaded the gentile centres and groups were formed, looking to Jerusalem as the headquarters. At this juncture when the balance swung this way and that, as regards the independence of the Christian way in relation to Judaism, St Paul appeared on the scene and the balance righted itself on the universal ideal. From then onwards, churches arose in different city centres with governing or advisory presbyters. It is not our

purpose to trace the further history of the church; how bishops became centres, and how in Western Europe there was a gravitating centre in Rome and how the Papacy became dominant in the life and fortunes of Western Christianity and culture. The point to be observed is what Paul and the apostles meant by this process. We shall draw them out thus :—

A big confederation of individual churches was not in their minds. Individual churches occupied the foreground with the authority of a pious apostle or his successor. The authority exercised was proportionate to the spiritual influence. Yet the authoritative person did not presume too much on his authority; it was confined within limits as even in the case of Paul. He was a father more than a ruler. It was the resurgent spiritual life, ascribed to the Holy Spirit, that marked this early stage. The later process of development was no doubt caused by the exigencies of the gentile world and the state persecutions. But it was not an improvement or gain but a loss to the creative ethics of Christianity, as a recent Russian scholar has pointed out. To all these must be added the germinal ideas of Pauline genius regarding the significance of the church. They were that the Gentile church was a wild olive grafted into the good olive; it was the Body of the Lord; and it was a building. Except the idea that the church is the Body of Christ, the other two have faded from the Christian consciousness and played no part in the polemics of the churches. Another idea that Paul owed to the Roman administrative genius was that the church was a colony whose mother country was heaven. In the abundant and variegated life that pulsed through the churches, Paul had ample scope for discovering resemblances to many forms of association, both organic and artificial. But the analogy of the body has remained the ruling idea without the animating principle.

We are as ardent as those who cling to the visible church, with the difference that we insist on the organism and not on organisation. Life is prior to all, and an organism can only be manifested as its effect. But an organisation is different. It is mechanical, directed not from within but from without. It does not adjust itself to changing circumstances. In India the conception of the church as the Body of Christ will veritably come to its own, as it has failed to do in the West. The

conception of immanence, that is, of the Lord dwelling and energising in the church, as in the cosmos, is not that life dwells in certain parts and not in others. The direction and control in the human body, it is said, is in the higher centres in the brain, and therefore the analogy requires that the church should be under the governance of higher ecclesiastical authority. But this, though it may be true physiologically, is not sanctioned by Paul, the originator of the Body view. He reorganised all the organs as equally necessary and important, and the least as deserving of more honour. The analogy is there but cannot be pressed to annihilation.

#### THE CHURCH IN INDIA

One other remark has yet to be made, and that is in answer to what Bishop Butler said in *The Analogy* more than two centuries ago, but which is still considered decisive by those who consider the forms taken by Western church life as of paramount obligation. He says there that a visible church is part of the Christian Revelation ; that it is meant to be a standing monument to the purity of natural religion, that such a visible church must have been provided with positive institutions; and that it is mere wantonness to ask why these should have been instituted and not others. Whether this argument can prove that the positive institutions now in existence in the West are indispensable, it is not for Indians to determine for the Western churches. So far as we can understand the Christian Revelation, it is not wedded to any such positive institutions, for such belong to human needs and can be served in various ways. What is more relevant, they have risen out of the historical setting of the Western churches and cannot set themselves as the only institutions that can serve Christians in India. To what positive institutions the Bishop referred, is not clear, but the guess may be hazarded that he was referring to the episcopal polity and the sacraments. If these are the positive institutions, we can only say that we cannot include them in the Revelation of Christ Himself, as the ever living Lord. Sacraments and forms of church polity, whether the historic episcopate, as it has been styled, or any other, are not eternal, and of the divine essence. We, trained in the religious life of India, cannot raise these subsidiary functions of religion to an equal place with the Lord. If we do so, that would plunge us into a quagmire of forms and formulas from which there could be no escape.



Here in India the Christian community is the Body of Christ. A common life will animate it; the churches, the *mutts*, the evangelists, the gurus and schools will be the organs through which this common life will manifest itself. There can be no doubt that in this Pauline view, understood as we have done, lies the secret of the future of the Indian *ecclesia*. The constitution of the church in the West and its history have followed a different course; and its career and its present position in the life of Europe are full of lessons to us in India. We cannot be its imitators and camp-followers. The Holy Spirit does not imitate but inspires. His working should not be obstructed by feeble attempts at giving to Indian spiritual life a habitation and home which are irksome to it. Impatience to see something done and something accomplished and, above all, fear of what the Spirit might do, are responsible for the feverish and frenzied activities of some sincere souls, who wish to bring the Indian churches into historical alliance with the West. It is not in the externals of its organisation, its magnificent facade, its moving pomp of worship, its mitres and tiaras, its councils and confessions, its sacerdotalism and sacramentalism, nor in anything else of this kind, but in its witness to the spirit of Christ, as the voice of one in the wilderness, calling ever unto men, hurrying on, to pause and reflect, to repent and be reborn; protesting as an alien force against the world's life, its culture and civilisation, and its tower of Babel; it is as a witness to the faith and as the faithful among the faithless (can this be said now?) that the church is the Body of the Lord, His Vicar, the moving shadow and representative on earth of those realities that live in the eternal realm.

X The church cannot be here an institution, but it can be an inspiration; it cannot be a constitution, but it can be and ought to be a city on a hill. It must say, Silver and gold have I none, but in the name of the Lord what cannot be done? The question is asked what the churches in the Mission field can contribute to the Church Universal. But it should be asked in all seriousness whether they can contribute anything at all worth mentioning, if they are taught to imitate, to imbibe, and inhale. From such a parasitical existence,—the reference here is not merely to material help—nothing of value can spring up. The scribe instructed in the Kingdom of God, must bring up from the treasure-house things old and new. Are the churches here to bring only things old, not old with the mellowness and beauty of antiquity, but old with the

musty smell of damp places? There is nothing old in the Lord. His is the eternal youth of the ages whom time cannot wither nor change stale. ✕

Before us lies the future—it is veiled from our eyes. The uncertainty is that of human will and purpose. The darkness is irradiated by the Light. But there is a contingency that may overtake us, though the time and circumstances no man can hazard to fix. The Church in India, the entire Christian community, may be called upon to pass through fire and water. The State under the influence of an alarmed Hindu and perhaps Islamic orthodoxy, may restrict the Church and its evangelising sphere and prohibit open propaganda. The crude machinery of law may be invoked. It is foolish to imagine that this will not happen because, forsooth, the British nation will not tolerate it nor will the admitted religious tolerance of a Congress Government, if it is going to be the government of the Congress at that time, and *satyagraha* principles, use the force of the police and the prison to thwart the Christian gospel. Signs are not wanting that both these guarantees will prove illusory. The British nation will look on with acquiescence at the rule of the majority and Congress *satyagraha* has even now proved a broken reed. The apostle of Satyagraha, of truth and non-violence, may become and is well qualified to become a relentless persecutor of the churches. Though all persecutions are bad not only for the authors of them, but what is less evident, for the sufferers as well, as Christian history has shown, they may prove blessings in disguise. If, as is not beyond the range of probability, such a persecution should break out, it would form an ordeal by fire, and submerge all the fine-spun distinctions of churches now in opposition, and knit them into one real Body. For the discovery of our unity in the Lord will transcend them. Out of such a furnace will emerge the outline of the church to be. It may not materialise, the trial here mentioned, but it may be the way out of many possibilities of the present *impasse*, when the upholders of Western traditions insist on their indispensability and some are prepared to get over them by formulas born of the same traditions.

✓ The Indian mind has yet to think out for itself what the New Testament conception of the Church is and its implications. We cannot accept the interpretations and historical

manifestations of the West. That is, in short, our answer to the present ecclesiasticism. At present, not having reached any positive conclusions from experiences, we are content to remain in the tents put up by our Western friends; but they can never be our permanent habitation.

There is yet a bigger reason why the Indian mind has not concentrated on the problems of the Church. That is its pre-occupation with the Lord Himself. It is not, as if we knew all that we ought to know about him. Intelligent observers are conscious of much that is false and superficial in the ordinary views about Him. Whether it is owing to an inherent defect in the world view (which we do not accept in entirety) or the impress of the teaching of the early evangelical missionaries, the historical Jesus has assumed in the Indian mind a shape and figure which the Gospel narrations do not support. That is because of one simple fact that has been embedded deeply in our religion. He is our redeemer from sin; and the teaching of conduct is an addition to the moral law of the Old Testament. Christianity is a composition of these two elements, the theology of personal and individual salvation and the ethics of personal and individual conduct. In one word, Christianity is a religion, very similar to Hinduism which seeks to achieve the redemption of the individual soul; but only Christianity is true and can do it, whereas Hinduism is false and fails to do it. This is also the Roman Catholic view of Christianity, only with this further difference that it is the only truth and Hinduism and Protestantism are both false, and Protestantism is falsier with a higher degree of falsity than Hinduism. All the changes and variations are repeated and rung on this single conception. To deny this even partially will provoke a storm of protest among us, and the innovator will be cast out as a heretic and an atheist. The salvation of the individual atom is the thing. This, of course, is not the gospel history and what is even more important, it does not work with the Hindu mind to which the appeal of individual salvation is made in the name of Jesus. Such an appeal is not effective, as the Hindu is already only too much in the grip of it. Should this lead to a neglect of personal salvation of which we cannot altogether denude the New Testament? Work out your salvation with fear and trembling—this is one of the main strands in the New Testament. And yet personal salvation is part of the larger whole of the Kingdom of God,

a part of the good news of a world revolution. If a new world, therefore of a new man, and of a marvellous power which is the precursor of it; such is the Gospel. Indian Christianity is not even dimly aware of this revolutionary idea and of the revolutionary power behind. We cannot hasten to identify the Church with the Kingdom of God, as Augustine did for the Western Church. This Kingdom of God was, no doubt, the Gospel that the Lord announced and for which He gave His life. It was in Him and through Him it is to come when He comes.

The idea of the Church, not yet brought to focus in the Christian mind, because it is not yet of any practical value nor even of any perceived spiritual value, is a large one. But it is equally patent to us that the Lord of the Kingdom of God is larger, infinitely larger. The Indian soul is threading its way in the mazes of this labyrinth. The light is arising in the darkness and we follow this gleam. The will-o'-the-wisp of the church to follow which we are invited by many from the West has lured the Western churches to the very verge of the precipice and beyond. In the depth below, we see human ambitions and policies and the commandments of men, ruling in the name of the Lord. We can find no glory in these struggles of the churches. The validity of ministerial orders, the position of bishops, and their powers—these and other cognate matters are unmeaning to us. It is our earnest hope that the Indian mind should not be compelled to listen to such debates, leaving aside the weightier matters. This is the sum and substance of our argument.



## *Section IV*

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### CHAPTER VI **RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

By  
**P. CHENCHIAH, B.A., M.L.**

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### CHAPTER VII **THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD**

BY  
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### CHAPTER VIII **ASHRAMS**

BY  
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## CHAPTER VI

# RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

BY P. CHENCHIAH

In America and Europe, the press and the publishing houses keep abreast of the times and it may be possible to get books and periodicals that give up-to-the last minute history of any movement or institution. In India, publication falls behind contemporary life and even the press may not tell us all that is happening except perhaps in politics. The delegates to the World Conference even if they consult the latest books may find that they stop short of Brahmo and Arya Samaj and some of them may perhaps deal with the Ramakrishna Mission. Travellers of a more intellectual type give pictures of India as they see but they are all apt to the superficial. The information has to be gathered from innumerable periodicals and pieced together. This has to be supplemented by personal observation and knowledge. The *Christian Patriot* used to give an yearly survey of events and at present no institution presents a survey of the religious field from time to time. The present article tries to give a picture of the religious influences playing their part to-day in Hinduism and does not include political or social tendencies.

A stranger to India must remember that Hinduism—religion and culture—for the first time in her history, is undergoing a profound revolution. Her ambitions and aspirations on one side, the agitative influence of the West on the other, are forcing the pace. East and West till now merely met in Asia. To-day they are as it were in the crucible. What may come out of it the future alone can disclose.

### THE NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION

Throughout Indian history, the Indian awakened to a sense of his destiny asked the question, how shall I escape *samsara*—the endless wheel of births and rebirths? Hinduism answers this question—the Indian counterpart of the Roman Jailor's famous enquiry to St. Paul—What shall I do to be saved? The less burdened soul was satisfied like his brethren



the world over with the query, how shall I insure my future after death? All the ritual, philosophy, religion in India centered round these two imperative interrogations of the soul. But to-day and this is the measure of the revolution, we ask, what shall we do to save the country and nation from foreign subjection and from the thralldom of tradition? How shall we make India a happy prosperous country for the labourer in the field and cottage? We are no longer troubled with personal salvation and individual future. It has been replaced by the quest of national salvation and concern for its future. One should not draw the inference that we have left religion for politics. The situation in India should be read in a different way than in the West. The quest for national salvation though associated with our political leaders, is nevertheless a religious pursuit. We are seeking it in the same spirit as we sought personal salvation—only instead of 'my soul' the 'soul of the nation' has become substituted. In the past we mortgaged the present to the future, spurned life for an Hereafter. Life was a sojourn; our home was in heaven. Today, our home is here in India—the present only matters; we refuse to exchange our life for the far off glory after death. Life in the past was under the jurisdiction of religion. But today religion comes under the jurisdiction of life. We refuse to accept a 'credit religion' to be cashed in future; we want a religion negotiable now. It is no longer, am I worthy of my religion, but is religion worthy of the nation? The writ is against religion and it has to justify its existence by its contribution to life. Can religion unite us? Can it give us strength to fight the evils of life? Can it so enrich our life as to make us contribute to the world life?—are the questions we put to religion. The failure of the Church to take note of this change in the national outlook accounts for the failure of the Hindu to see the relevancy of the Christian message.

A single man—Mahatma Gandhi—has wrought this revolution. Trained to be a Barrister, he soon found himself in South Africa in a situation, not much different from that which confronted Moses. Indians in South Africa were not slaves, but were oppressed. The call to save them came to Mahatmaji. He was not endowed with power to do miracles and rescue his countrymen from an unwilling ruler. He released a power far more potent than the plagues of Egypt. Just then Tolstoy propounded the strange doctrine that the Sermon on the

Mount can and should be made the basis of Government and Society. Even in the land of Revolutions this was a daring doctrine. Government all over the world and in all ages was based on force and the suggestion that Government should rest on non-violence was thought to be sheer anarchy. Christendom was accustomed to praise and adore Jesus and neglect his teachings. This doctrine of Tolstoy that we may neglect praise and adoration if only we follow Jesus and his principles was felt to be a danger to Christianity by the Church. Curiously enough it was a Hindu, not a Christian, that accepted the teachings of Tolstoy and with the zeal of a new convert immediately proceeded to apply it to a situation which was by no means simple or easy. His famous march to the Capital, his trial and incarceration are now matters of history. He won in a way. Indians remained while 50,000 Chinese were repatriated without compensation. The Indian learned self-respect and the Government learned to respect him. Coming to India the experiment was tried in one or two places and finally on a large scale in the non-co-operation movement—which filled the jails to capacity with the intelligentsia. The movement was called off as the workers, according to Mahatmaji, did not yet possess that moral discipline to resist the impulse to retaliate. Non-co-operation may be outwardly a failure. The future historian of India will mark it as the decisive step in the direction of Purna Swaraj. We are not concerned with politics. But we may point out that the faith of Mahatmaji involves three principles (i) That religion, religious discipline, religious power are intended to build up free states and societies and individuals. In other words, that religion should not exhaust itself in promises about the future; in dogma and ritual. It should not discard life. If it does not serve life, it should be discarded. (ii) That Jesus in his teachings on the Sermon on the Mount and his sufferings on the Cross placed in the hands of man a new weapon of defence and offence, far more powerful than force and coercion and oppression. (iii) That the use of Ahimsa requires a well tempered and disciplined mind. It is the weapon of the courageous and not of the weakling. Here again we pass a new judgment on religion. Religion must give us power to live and not fill us with vain hopes and delusions.

#### ABUSE OF RELIGION

Mahatmaji's way of looking at religion was challenging. He himself had faith in God and religion. He is firm in his

belief that religion, if only we go to the living centre and not to its institutionalised petrifications, may yet serve man in his struggle for freedom and fulness. But others who weighed religion came to different conclusions and they had ample justification in the history of religion past and present. When confronted with practical problems of to-day, Hinduism betrayed most disquieting features. The younger leaders of India struggling with the colossal issues of national unity and liberty found in religion—not exactly a friend but an obstacle. Our biggest problem is communalism. Here religion feeds the fires of communal jealousies and hatred, sows the seeds of distrust and animosity and renders every effort at unity futile. Every measure of reform, some of them involving elementary justice to man and woman, has met with opposition from orthodox men and institutions. Opening of temples to the panchamas, child-marriage restraint reform, granting of rights of property to women, all these have been opposed in the name of religion. More, half the riots and public disturbances owe their origin to the same source. Hindu Gods love the din and clamour of music. The Mohammedan God demands silence and quietude. One should have expected quite the reverse. Yet most of our 'disturbances' centre round the use of music in religious processions. Between the fanatical Muslim and the equally fanatical Hindu—the sensible man just wonders whether religion has not outlived its usefulness if capable of such puerilities. Then we have the question of conversion where for the glory of God men snatch at men and annex them to their communities. The younger generation looking at the recent history of religion and its present degenerate condition has grown frankly agnostic. At this juncture Russia has achieved a tremendous task at social reconstruction without the help of religion and in a sense by eliminating it from the realm of realities. The Russian experiment has impressed young India tremendously. Jawaharlal Nehru, the leader of the new school of thought—which has a great following at present, does not accept 'dictatorships.' He positively hates them. The social achievement of Russia stands vindicated, notwithstanding the method. To centre political and social life round the 'worker' is an ideal—entirely Christian. Jawaharlal Nehru and his followers are not against religion. They are candidly agnostic as to its utility. They have arrived at a conclusion which thoughtful men often reached whenever religion degenerates, that goodness in man can be certain foundation for moral progress. Religion is not always a

conscious creed. It often survives intellectual renunciation of creeds. Religion and culture become woven into the texture and constitution of man. Nehru has the best of Hinduism converted into the stuff of his personality. Whether he calls himself a Hindu or not, his life expresses the vital experience of faith—love of fellow being and passionate desire to change traditions and Government for his benefit. Whence comes this passion if not from religion? Like Shelley who while rejecting dogmatic faith breathed with the very lungs of Christianity, young India carries Hinduism in blood and bone rather than in thought. This 'natural' religion (i.e.) belief in the essential and ultimate goodness of man both in the East and West constitutes the religion of the patriot and the politician.

#### THE CULT OF PATRIOTISM

One may easily miss this interesting development if not pointed out. Nationalism has been a fever and delirium in the West. India has no nationalism in the Western sense. It has that vague thing called patriotism which elsewhere has crystallised into nationalism—the sentiment of incandescent love for the land of your birth. In other countries patriotism finds immediate outlet in action but in India, it has practically become a competitor to ancient faith. Our National Anthem is neither a prayer nor a boast. It merely describes the beauty of India. India personified as Mother—Bharathamatha—is the object of worship. Subramania Bharathi, a poet and a genius, was the priest of the new cult. One of his songs often sung by musicians, proclaims that differences of creed, colour do not matter—we are all children of the same mother. The poet has written a hymn about the death and resurrection of Jesus. At Benares, the Jerusalem of India, a temple of quite a new type was built recently open to all creeds where a huge map of India stands in the holy of holies. The artist usually shapes the map of India into the figure of an Indian mother—with Himalayas as her head, Kanyakumari as her feet, her sari fluttering East to West Punjab to Bengal. We have Ashrams and Mutts for Bharatha Matha. This cult of patriotism celebrates the advent of a new goddess in a somewhat overcrowded pantheon. But the new goddess does not come from heaven but arises out of the soil, as Sita Devi did. She stands as a personification of India's reproach to dogmatic, ritualistic and other

worldly religions that do not spring from the hearts of the people or do not try to help us in our struggles but prepares us for a worthy future—having made us in the process unworthy of the present. While Nehru and others stand for the abstract and rational creed of patriotism, this new movement sums up the colourful and emotional expression of a new urge in the heart of the nation.

### SELF RESPECT MOVEMENT

Some years ago a movement, mainly political in scope, by name Non-Brahmin movement, came into existence and was in power before the Congress Government. A social development of this movement challenged the primacy of the Brahmin in religion. They advocated that each caste should have its own priests to conduct religious ceremonies and that the Non-Brahmin should dispense with the Brahmin priest. Later, a marriage reform was attempted with some success. The idea was not so much to make marriage secular but to bring about marriages without the intervention of the Brahmin clergy—by agreement of man and woman to live together as husband and wife. The more intellectual section of this group led an attack *against Aryanism* (let the Germans note this) in favour of Dravidianism. They sought to realign Ramayana making Ravana the hero. They also tried to reinstate a purely Dravidian Hinduism. At the present moment, under Russian contact, the group has manifested a decided anti-religious bias. The attack against priest-craft in religion has turned into a war against religion itself. In this connection, we may refer to an influential Mahratta group—definitely agnostic and occasionally anti-religious. This group was unique as it consisted of leaders who have done great service in social and political fields. Dr. Paranjpye, the Senior Wrangler; Gokhale the political leader; Karve, the founder of the University for Women may be mentioned. The opinion about religion held by these are personal and was never made propaganda. It is curious that Maharashtra which after Mohammedan conflict gave to India a series of saints intensely religious, should have under the impact of the West brought into prominence humanitarianism without pronounced religious bias.

### SANATANA DHARMA

Meanwhile orthodoxy was perturbed. Strikingly enough Hinduism lacks what may be called acquisitive zeal. Its

conception of truth never favoured the idea that those outside its pale stand in imminent peril of their souls. It looked with indifference on the inroads of Mussalmans and Christians and parted with converts without struggle. The Arya Samaj was the first to awake to the new danger. The Samaj was intensely missionary and sought to recapture those converts to Islam and Christianity. It should be noted that even the Arya Samaj did not attempt to convert the followers of other religions. The Hindu Mahasabha should be characterised as a defensive organisation. As against Mohammedans, it stood for the social and political rights of the Hindus. It championed Hindu culture rather than Hindu religion. The problem of conversions interested them in its political aspect. Their influence though strong is not decisive in any area of their operation. The appellation '*Sanatana Dharma*' was appropriated by Arya Samajist first and used as a weapon of militant propaganda. Orthodoxy represented by temple authorities, matadhipathies and acharyas moved not in the interest of 'numbers' but in protest of change. Their pet aversion was not the missionary but legislatures. The readers should firmly grasp the idea that the objections to conversion do not come from the custodians of religion. They seem to grant the right for man to change his faith. This is due in a certain measure to inter-religious propaganda or sectarian conversion that have always taken place under the sanction of heads of religion. Lost in the intricacies of a huge institution they did not see the problem. For example, Sanatanists would rather lose Panchamas to Christians or Muslims than admit them into the temple. They stand for *status quo* and call that 'eternal' which appears to many of us only traditional. Social legislation roused them from their torpor and they are all at present engaged in throwing themselves before the car of progress, with what result to themselves or to progress, remains to be seen. The Hindu Religious Endowment Act has also provoked their opposition. This Act brings the religious endowment under the supervision of the Government acting through a Board with a view to prevent maladministration of temple property and income. Like Ritualists of the Christian Church, Sanatanists are anxious to preserve the faith according to tradition. They have not come into contact or collision with the real religious forces of other faiths and their possible 'reactions' to them can only be guessed. The movement suffers from the leadership of lawyers who conceive the defence of religion in terms of

argumentation of the law courts. Most of these leaders themselves are innocent of any knowledge of Sanskrit literature as they earn their livelihood by expounding Anglo Saxon law in courts. Their constant opposition to the newly awakened social consciousness which demands fair play and justice to women and depressed classes, has not added either to their prestige or strength.

### NEW HUMANITARIANISM

Hinduism has discarded quite early in its history animal sacrifices as primitive and crude. This was due to the revolution of the Upanishads and the humanitarian outlook of Buddhism and Jainism. Sacrifices survive in an attenuated form among Brahmins and in a large scale in non-aryan substrata of the religion in vogue among Sudras and Panchamas. One of the reasons why Christian theology repulses the Hindu is that it insists on integrating Jesus in terms of the Jewish sacrificial system. Of late throughout India there has been a protest against sacrifices. In many places public opinion has discountenanced their usage. At Kalighat in Calcutta, there was an unsuccessful 'hunger strike' against animal sacrifices. The protest is symptomatic of the stirrings of great heart which institutionalism smothers.

### THE RELIGION OF THE ARTIST

No picture of religious India of today can be complete without the venerable figure of Tagore. No family has contributed more for the enrichment of national life than the Tagores. Poets, musicians, religious founders, painters, cinema stars have all sprung out of this family. But the unique contribution of Tagore is the religion of the artist. His poetic gifts have enabled him to compound the echoes of Upanishads with the glamour of modern era and spin out of the country life of India a garment worthy of God. He makes us feel that life, good life, beautiful life is prayer and praise. I do not know whether the musical concerts of the West end with a doxology. Indian concerts do—with a praise to the nama and rupa of God—of the forms and names of God. Nama and Rupa in Indian philosophy stand for creation. Tagore's religion of the artist stands at the other extreme of the philosopher's creed—praise of God beyond and before creation. Tagore sings of God the creator; of creation the,

glory of God. Through Santiniketan, more an Ashram than a College, he propounds a religion of the spirit which does not chain itself to the past or lose in the sands of ritual and tradition—but stands up to life with creative energy. Some of the finest young men of India are those who believe in the creative beauty of religion and who are seeking to express religious feeling in arts (i.e) in music, painting and dance. It is difficult to fix in words the subtle aroma which the Brahmoism of Tagore type imparts to Indian life.

### THEOSOPHY

Tambaram can hardly escape Adyar, the stronghold of Theosophy. At present this movement may be said to be keeping time. There can hardly be any doubt that Adyar is a liberalising influence in Hinduism. We witness there a pleasant commingling of East and West and an honest attempt to implement the Hindu faith amidst the claims and demands of contemporary life. Since the death of Dr. Besant, the oracles are silent. Out of Adyar has arisen a Hindu religious leader who has some influence on contemporary religion. Mr. Krishnamurthi has been preaching fearless courage in religion. He repudiates tradition, at any rate, tradition that shackles human spirit. He calls men away from mystery cults and mystic-rituals to a free and scientific investigation of life and the causes of its limitations. He has a sweet and persuasive voice and though his influence can hardly be described as either deep or wide, his plea for freedom in religion happens to be in tune with the dominant mood of New India.

### MISSIONS AND MOVEMENTS

Ramakrishna Institutes may be regarded as the parallel in Hinduism of the missionary movement in Christianity. The Sadhus of these mutts combine the social zeal of the Buddhist with religious enthusiasm of the Hindu. Advocates of Advaitism, they have sought to yoke social enthusiasm to what was once regarded as an other worldly creed. They are of a practical turn of mind and in all their social undertakings, the disciples of the mutt have shown wisdom and zeal not usually associated with Advaitins. They abhor cant and obscurantism and stand for healthy reform of Hinduism. Their world wide contacts are a new source of enrichment to Indian



religious life. The delegates to the World Conference are likely to meet evidences of the strength of this movement around them and may be surprised they have to search for tangible activities of the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj of which so much is written in books. Around Madras, the Ramakrishna Mission and Theosophy are more in evidence than any other religious activity.

#### GEETA DAY

In an unassuming way, another<sup>y</sup> movement which has for its object the spread of the message of the Geeta, is slowly making headway. In India there was always a tendency to make religion esoteric and aristocratic—the faith of an enlightened and choice few. Geeta was traditionally regarded as high philosophy for the elect. The Geeta movement maintains that Geeta is the gospel for the masses and that Sri Krishna has a message for every human soul seeking a way of salvation and that the creed of non-attachment constitutes an ethical basis for enduring national superstructure. The leaders of this movement have brought out cheap reprints of the Geeta in the vernacular and make people read it for devotion. The idea is to make the Geeta occupy the same place in Hinduism as the Bible occupies in Christianity.

#### RAMANA MAHARISHI AND RAMDAS

With an insight hardly paralleled in religious history, Hinduism attaches supreme importance to realisation. To believe, to pray, to imitate God is good but 'to be' like God is above all this. To believe in Jesus, to pattern our life after him, to surrender ourselves to Him are desirable. But to be like Jesus yea to be Jesus—is a pearl of great price. When you 'realise' you draw the world to you. So did Ramakrishna Paramahansa. So does Ramana Maharishi. Till a few years ago he was unknown. To-day he attracts to his place men from all parts of India—visitors from Europe and America. I have not been to him, but some of my Christian friends who have seen him tell me that in his presence they felt they were in touch with the deepest secrets of spiritual life. You feel a new influence—something like the heart burning within you. From Mangalore we hear of another voice—calm, self possessed, serene—of Ramdoss who wandered through India and now has settled down since he found the Lord. May Panchamas enter temples? asked some orthodox people. Why not? replied

Ramdas. 'Are not they the children of God? Do they not break the spiritual spell?—persisted the questioner. "What nonsense" came the sharp reply.

#### HARI NATH AND MARGA NATH

Lest we should forget that religion is not all reason, a curious cult—started by a Bengali Post Master has spread to the south gaining a following. "Call on the name of Hari-nath and he will answer you" seems to be the gist of this new faith. Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan are all welcome. O! taste the Lord—See how sweet is his name—is the message of this group. Marganath—a Muslim convert to higher Hindu philosophy has been preaching a universal faith beneath names and labels. He too calls for men of faith—their religion does not matter. He initiates, leads you to realisation. That sufficeth for a Hindu. Experience the first and last word of religion: name and mark—irrelevant. Another figure has stepped out of the sect of Radhasamis who on retiring from Government service founded a religious brotherhood without caste and an industrial centre which has won praise from every quarter in India.

#### KAMAKOTI AND KURTAHOTI

Of Sankaracharis—the official heads of religious orders, the above two have attracted attention not so much for their learning as for their desire to understand the modern mind and to suit Hinduism to the urgent needs of the day. Their official position prevents them from throwing themselves into the current of life. That even the conservative heads of religion are feeling the throb of new life and the call of the new age, is symptomatic of the divine discontent that has spread far and wide.

#### • THE GREAT EXPERIMENTERS

Running through the centre of Hinduism is the stream of life known as yoga. This word literally means union, but by association of ideas has acquired a larger connotation. It indicates the primacy of the spirit. Yogis worship God in spirit and in truth. Names and labels attract the ordinary men. But the yogi seeks the spirit behind form—the spirit that pervades the variety of forms. Some of the most sensi-

tive souls in the religious history of India are yogis. They are the earliest to recognise the greatness of Jesus. Yoga, realisation, union with God—has always been the spiritual ambition of the Indian. But Yoga requires Sadhana and Sadhana involves ceaseless research and experiment. Jesus was. You say “Be Jesus” or “Become Jesus” The Indian asks—how? Christ attracts. He creates a desire to be like Him. But we do not know how to become like Him. The weakness of Christianity and missionary methods lies right here. The missionary and the pastor have no answer save hurling texts at humanity. India wants realisation and does not see in us Christ realised. We should like to be transformed into Christ. But nobody can tell us how this can be done. All pretend. The Church is the greatest pretender of all. None knows. Hence the primacy of the experimenters in science and religion. How shall we reproduce God or Christ? We must do it by instinct and impulse as man does or by analysis and discovery as science does. Bose, Ray, Raman are our scientists and inventors. Who are our great religious experimenters? India herself does not know. They do not preach. They do not even announce till they are sure. I can mention two of them both in South India—one alive and the other no longer with us.

Sri Arabindo has been experimenting with a new Yoga. All Yoga tries to transform personality—experiments with the roots of life. Sri Arabindo does not accept the traditional Yoga. He wants a new creation, a new man. He has set out to discover a new creative energy. You can read much of what he thinks in his books. But the experiment is not yet complete. In a bye lane of Kumbakonam abutting Kaveri there was another great personality, who silently attracted, mostly lawyers, the hardest for religion to conquer. He too experimented in immortality. Both Arabindo and Master C.V. V. asked the question, Why death? Of what they said and did, this article may not record. But the question they ask aligns them with Christianity. Did not Jesus ask “Why die”? Was not his Resurrection the answer. The great Ramalinga Swami, the hymnologist of our age believed in resurrection. Once the right question is asked, Jesus who rose from the dead comes to his own with the spiritual experimentalists of India. The pity of it!—the Christian does not believe in experiment. He believes in mantras and magic.

I have described contemporary religious India as I know. This much I should emphasise—that all I have described stands out on the background of traditional Hinduism, which still claims the homage of millions of Hindus. During the recent eclipse, millions turned up to bathe in the Ganges. These movements I have noticed are like serpents of light criss-crossing on an immovable background—the mysterious Hinduism—noble and ignoble, saving and damning—always attracting and sometimes hypnotising. Yet even this rock of ages shows the influence of the time spirit. Strange thoughts and ideas, mysterious promptings and impulses now from its own deep depths—now from the currents of alien culture and faiths—suffuse the mind, and heart of religious India. Beneath the seemingly immobile surface, revolutionary currents are creating a spiritual commotion. The soul is moved as never it did since the days of Upanishads. That revolution gave us *Brahman*. What will this give? Religious Art has changed. Sri Rama and Sri Krishna wear new faces, speak a new language. If you look at the religious films you perceive the reality of the new revolution. Gods no longer sit in heaven commanding and condemning us. They come to us, move with us—uplifting us. The Creator is portrayed as taking interest in creation. The saints of old come back with a new heart. Their extravaganza of faith no longer attracts. Their miracles no longer appeal. But their love still transforms and attracts the Indian. India is changing not in her face and features but in her mind and soul.

#### THE MESSAGE OF INDIA

We have to mention one fact which is as significant as the return of Jews to Palestine. All religions—all live religions have either sprung in India—Hinduism and Buddhism—or have come to India—Islam and Christianity. What signifies this conjunction of stars on the Indian sky? The propagandist and the preacher thinks in terms of elimination. All religions should cease to be except his. What does India think of this coming of religions to her? The most sensitive of minds and the most prophetic of souls are cogitating about it. *Satyameva Jayathi*. Truth shall triumph. But how? Not by struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Truth triumphs by commingling of spirits. The big idea slowly taking shape as the result of spiritual struggle and turmoil: an idea

which slowly mounts to conviction in the Indian Christian, Muslim and Hindu alike is that religions in order to save, should break their moulds. Religion or religions must escape the bondage of dogma and doctrine, the prison of churches, traditions, rituals, and interfuse into each other in spirit. The recognised boundaries should go as well as the labels. We shall not vindicate our faith by dragging converts across the borders into each other's territory. Religion should break through these bonds of institution and tradition. The revelations of God, now bottled up in different religions, should coalesce. The light that shone through Geeta, Zendavesta, Buddha, Christ, and Muhamud—shall confluence and man shall be baptised in this confluence of spiritual rivers and come out as the Son of God. Thus will the Indian become a Christian without ceasing to be altogether a Hindu or a Muslim. No man can serve two masters. But every man can love two parents, father and mother. India is anxiously waiting for this breaking of moulds. When this prayer of hers is granted, her great hope will be redeemed—not to reject or lose aught that has come from God but become the inheritors of the totality of God's grace. This is not eclecticism. This is the faith that God will be all in all to all of us. For this new hope, India renounces the dream of Vivekananda—to preach Advaita to the world. If you do not sense the intensity of this hope, you are still a stranger to India. For this is the Gospel of Ramakrishna, the dream of Theosophy, the object of Federation of Faiths, the expectation of C. V. V. and Arabindo, the will of Jesus, and the hope of his Indian disciples.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN A NON CHRISTIAN WORLD\*

BY P. CHENCHIAH

At the Jerusalem Conference where every delegate was an expert or a seasoned worker in a special field, Dr. Kraemer made himself felt as a thinker and leader of thought. Whenever he spoke, he commanded attention at once by his sincerity and earnestness of purpose, originality and lucidity of exposition. The task of giving intellectual direction to the World Conference at Tambaram has been appropriately assigned to him. As the Professor of History of Religions in the University of Leiden, he brings to his task high intellectual gifts and his work in the religious field in the East eminently qualifies him for the survey of spiritual forces at work in Asia. The result of his labours is the book under review. We take it that the views expressed in the book, if not intended to carry the imprimatur of the officials of the Conference, have their approval since it was commissioned by the International Council. Its issue in advance is perhaps intended to place before the delegates a panoramic view of the situation and to draw their attention to crucial facts as they bear on the Christian Mission and Message. We have no hesitation after reading the book in holding that it amply fulfils the anticipations of the Council. It is difficult to read it without being impressed and at times overawed by the sweep and grandeur of Christian Missions, of the fascination and beauty of the adventure of religion, as it expresses itself in Christian and Non-Christian faiths, and above all of the sanctity of the high calling of a Christian in a world where God and Man, now together, now in separation, often-times in opposition, try to fulfil a destiny which from the beginning unfolds itself as a mystery beyond his intellect and

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\* *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*—By H. Kraemer, Professor of the History of Religions, University of Leiden, Edinburgh House Press, London.

grasp, yet grips him with inescapable compulsion. We feel as we follow the author that the Christian adventure whatever its tangible results or its measurable success, still continues to be the calling of heroes and sons of God.

Apart from its particular value to the delegates, the theme has a special appeal to every student of religion. They only know of the fascination of theology, who have studied it not so much from books, but in the changing vicissitudes of a spiritual life. Theology fascinates not because it clarifies thought and fortifies faith, but because it lures us into a pursuit where ideas elude our grasp but always draw us Godward like the golden hind of our folk lore. The Indian Christian's interest in the theme is not merely theological or intellectual. To us in India the inter-relations of religions have become a matter of life and death. We can have no peace here or hereafter and our nation can have no future till we find the key to the mystery. The Christian in India, and for this he may praise the Lord with a full heart, has yet no Church or theology, which he feels bound to defend and maintain. He still struggles with the Lord, seeking to understand the why and wherefore of Him. He still feels he can never understand Jesus till he understands the drama of God's dealing with man in and through the other religions of the world. I candidly confess that I read the book mainly to find what the author has to say on the relation of Jesus to other religions of my land. If I am in a way disappointed in my expectations, I am free to confess that I have not read recently a book half so stimulating, challenging and thought provoking as this. The author's range of study has been immense. There is very little that has appeared in print relevant to the topic, that has escaped his attention. In dwelling with the broad currents of religion, and their interplay, in the analysing of the social and spiritual forces that are arraigned for and against Christ, in estimating the course of national events in their effects on the future of Missions, the author has revealed not only a penetration which gets him behind the seeming and the superficial, but also a vision which takes him to the heart of a tangled situation. As my object is not merely to review the book but also to record the reactions of the Indian Christian mind to it, I shall first state the contents of the book and give the reader a summary of the author's views and then set down the impressions it creates on the mind of an Indian Christian reader and the lines of thought it provokes.

Dr. Kraemer begins with a survey of the political and social changes that are taking place in the West and the East and explains how these constantly shifting forces set to the missionary the vigilant pursuit of perpetual readjustment. If you hope to cure the world of its ills, you must observe your patient and feel his pulse constantly. Next, he addresses himself—herein is the heart of the book as well as the theme—to an understanding of the meaning and purpose of the revelation of God in Jesus. Then follows a study of the non-Christian systems of life and thought in Chapters V to VII. The conclusions are then aligned with a view to envisage a worthy missionary approach to the task of redemption in a sense committed by Christ to the Christian. We propose to deal with the topics of the book under four heads:

- (i) The missionary and the world he has to deal with ;
- (ii) The malady of the world today : its causes and cure ;
- (iii) The meaning of Christianity and its relation to non-Christian faiths ;
- (iv) What shall we do and how shall we do it ?

### THE MISSIONARY AND THE WORLD CRISIS

Dr. Kraemer describes the world situation tersely in one phrase—between the times—(i.e.,) hung in the chasm of the past that fast recedes and the future not yet materialised. The present is a dangerous parenthesis, a hiatus without content, but pregnant with fate. The picture presents itself in a three-fold crises—of the West and the East and the Church. In the West, science had been the competitor of religion for the homage of man. It has developed a gospel which percolates into the heart of the man in the street by a thousand streams of suggestion from the daily press and current literature. Should we crystallise the religion of science in a word, that word would be 'Positive' in the sense in which Comte and Austin use it (i.e.,) a non-theological outlook that does not go beyond the forces of creation—of self and nature for the elucidation and ordering of life. In the words of the author: "Viewed from a religious standpoint, the fundamental fact stands that objective moral standards and religious realities which formerly were acknowledged as the spiritual basis of all individual and corporate life and the openers to



the realm of the eternal which constituted in all the ages in some way the background of great and small civilizations and societies, have evaporated in the modern world." More spectacular and in a sense more disastrous than the competition of science is the rivalry of the State. The State is no longer a political structure, but a religion claiming the worship of the citizen, complete and absolute. The State steps forward, takes its place along with science, as a new religion, weaning away man from his loyalty to the gods of old. Communism and Fascism like Hinduism and Mohamedanism and Buddhism, has become an 'ism' of the modern, occupying his whole attention and demanding his complete surrender. Though the second factor is only lightly touched and the first very much underlined, the author does bring out both these elements in the crisis of the West.

The crisis in the East is brought about by the penetration of Western culture. The Eastern revolution owes its impetus to machines. Improved communications have mixed the waters of life into a turbulent eddy in the East. Cultural contact, the main characteristic of the relation of East and West in the last century, has given place to the personal and intimate contact of to day. We no longer read of Western culture. The fiery waves of the West are sweeping over us. The radio, the cinema, the bus and the aeroplane are driving fissures into the granite solidarity of Eastern societies. The East which resisted the sword is succumbing to the machine. The nationalism of the East is a virus taken direct from the virulent culture of the West. Tradition which has gripped us for centuries past withdraws its palsied hand before a new awakening, whose turbulent insurgence defies analysis. Turkey, Japan, China and Persia are fast absorbing the culture of the West without apology or pretence. It will be a facile hope to expect that the past cultures of the East can thus be submerged. What happens when the East struggles with the West, not in external environments but in the realm of the mind and soul—the future alone can tell. But the present disturbs and fills us with disquietude.

The crisis of the world necessarily spells a crisis of the Church. The Church exists to save the world. Calamities that destroy the world annihilate the Church. The Church does not seem to realise the gravity of the peril—not to the world, but to itself. As in the past, so in the present, it

awakens to realities a little too late. We find it difficult to make it realise that a wasting disease threatens its life. *Corpus Christianum* lies shattered. Everybody sees it but the Church. The Vatican cherishes dreams of dominion even as the Duce contemplates its expulsion. What will the Church do if it loses its corpus? Can it exist in spirit alone without a body? Christianity without a Christendom—can we imagine?

#### DEFECTS OF DR. KRAEMER'S SURVEY

Such then is the picture of the present situation that the author presents. Obviously, it is defective in content and emphasis. More is made of the Eastern crisis than the Western, of the perils abroad than of perils at home. When we view the situation in its true perspective, dangers from the base are more than those in the field. Let us fill the picture a little more in detail. Till now, the missionary movement was the vanguard of the expansion of the West. The West came and the missionary followed, or if you prefer the other way, the missionary came and the West followed. The existence of a Western power possessing the prestige of invaders and later of rulers, within call as it were, was undoubtedly a source of strength. The general prestige of the West even among the independent nations of the East, such as Japan and China invested the missionary movement with a protective value of no small magnitude. The missionary was conscious of an ultimate reserve of power in case of desperate need and this freed him not only from a sense of desolation but also from a feeling of isolation. He was, as it were, within calling distance of his own race and culture though he worked in the land of aliens. Greater than the presence of the West in the East, was the solid, firm, and unshakable foundation of the Western Church and social order in its homelands. The missionary movement may be well said to have struck roots in the home soil and put forth its branches far and wide, reaching out to the utmost corners of the world resting not infrequently, now lightly, now heavily, on the material help and prestige of the West in the East. The solidarity of Christendom in the West and the prestige of Western culture in the East are both passing away.

#### WESTERN SOCIETY AND MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

This revolutionary change that radically alters the situation has happened in the West. This is the new factor since

Jerusalem which has entered into the situation. Edinburgh did not consider such a change as even a possibility. At Jerusalem it was present as a presentiment. When the World Conference meets at Tambaram, it threatens to become a *fait accompli*. Dr. Kraemer very properly admonishes the Missions not to count on the upper ten but on the Peter's-pence of the millions of Christians. As a matter of fact, the support of the missionary movement comes not from the upper, ten or lower millions but from the thousands of the middle-class. The middle class or bourgeois was the prop of the social order, the pillar of the Church, and the feeder of Missions. The social revolution of the West threatens this class in every land. The missionary should realise this. A graver danger issues out of the political conditions in Europe. Hitherto the missionaries were representatives of a uniform and unified culture. As against the East, the West was a well integrated, homogeneous civilisation. The West was united not only in colour but also in culture. The moral value arising out of this double bond of colour and culture was beyond estimation. It imparted a subtle strength to the moral fabric of Missions. The catastrophies of current revolution are tearing this seamless robe of Western culture. The author realises the spiritual loss involved to the missionary movement in the shattering of *Corpus Christianum* but does not correctly gauge the moral loss arising out of the breaking of Western culture. The West cannot and today does not stand as one against the East. The dissolution of body is calamitous enough. This condemns Western Christianity to ghostly existence. But cultural disparity and divergence spell moral disintegration. Already the new missionaries from Germany are Nazis. Recently we had the unedifying spectacle of a Catholic Bishop blessing Franco as the true child of the Church and conferring on him the Episcopal benediction for victory in a fractricidal war. How can the missionary adorn the tale when the nations of the West call each other devils and seek to annihilate each other? One is not so much troubled about the fate of Church Union when one perceives this new danger to missionary amity. Dr. Kraemer has something to say about Mahatmaji's attitude to conversions. As I read those lines, I wondered whether the learned author is at all alive to the significance of the drift of things in the West. Any day, Dr. Kraemer may rest assured, Gandhiji will be a more

generous opponent of Missions than Hitler or Mussolini for the simple reason that he has still a living faith in religion, while the dictators own no God. Facile critics of Gandhiji would do well to reflect that the first interdict against Protestant Missions came not from the Indian but from the East India Company, and the first persecution on an extensive scale on the Malabar Coast did not proceed from the Hindu, but from the Roman Catholic against heretical Christians. The poor Indian pagan, heathenish and given to idolatry, had more toleration and human love than the champion of truth in the Church. Incidentally, Gandhi's and in fact the Indian opposition to conversion partly arises not from disregard of truth, as the author supposes, but from a totally different conception of truth to that of the author. But that is a different story which need not engage us at present.

Another portent of the times has altogether escaped the attention of the author. Before the Great War the Brown and Black soldier had fought against White and later under him. During and after the European War, the Asiatic and the African fought with the white races against white races. In France, Indian soldiers fought the German side by side with the British. The Negro and the French were together in the trenches. In Spain centuries after his expulsion, the Moor has come back to take part in the civil war. Alliances between Eastern and Western powers, till now not a feature of political relations are coming apace—France and Russia, Germany and Japan, Russia and Turkey. The profound effects of the new alignment on Missions should not be lost sight of. Franco will not encourage the sending of missionaries to Moors. We already hear of Mussolini contemplating the excommunication of the Pope at the instance of Germany. Germany may not enthuse over missionary propaganda in Japan, if she protests. In politics, alliances and friendly relations are everything and religion always a convenience to be used or abused to suit political emergencies. Already the Church experiences the unpleasant consequences of her intransigence in Germany. This aspect in the posture of European affairs deserves greater attention in any scientific forecast of the future of Missions.

#### WESTERN HERITAGE AND THE EASTERN CHURCH

One more touch before the picture is completed. The growth and existence of the Asiatic Churches as a vital factor

in the situation finds a reference in one or two places. Passages are extracted which speak of high hopes about the new Churches in the East. Oscar Buck's remark from *Christianity Tested* is quoted: "It is in Asia, not in America or Europe or Africa that the future of the Christian religion will be determined." This view rests on a reading of the situation that countries in which Christianity grew and got acclimatised may not be propitious for its future development. This accords with our opinion that the true menace to missionary cause may arise from forces in the West rather than in the East. How far the Eastern Churches realise the high hopes entertained of them, remains to be seen. The Indian Christian has not done much in the past. Possibly with his adolescence, creative activities may come. One fact cannot be too strongly emphasised namely that Eastern Christians—the new ones at any rate—are not going to be tradition or churchbound. The time is long gone by when he can be exhibited as a trophy of imperialistic missionary campaign. The convert is not a double deserter from the culture and religion of his race. He has accepted Christ. He still accepts his obligations to his country. He remains the son of the land, a patriot anxious and willing with the rest to achieve his country's freedom and prosperity. Let there be no mistake about it, Christianity is not going to drive a wedge in national solidarity. Nor is the Eastern Christian likely to be a good child and accept the theology and the Church offered to him by his monitors. Of this we have ample signs. Let it be clearly understood that we accept nothing as obligatory save Christ. Church doctrine and dogma, whether from the West or from the past, whether from Apostles or from modern critics, are to be tested before they are accepted. We do not see any reason why Aristotle and Plato, Kant and Hegel should be regarded as safer guides for Christian theology than the Indian philosophers, Sankara and Ramanuja. We do not see why we should accept the Roman Catholic or Anglican conception of the Church or indeed any conception of the Church at all as essential to Christianity. Much disillusionment would have been saved, if authors and promulgators of Church Union schemes had realised this. They tested their hopes too much on the Indian Christian gratefully receiving anything offered to him for his good by the ecclesiastics. The movement crept forward ten years. But soon the Indian Christian awoke to its implications; it began to move backward and we are where we were when we started. No

scheme which is not born of the fervent emotion of the Indian, which is not begotten of his heart, can hope to thrive. Church Union can no more be planted in India than Churches. All will go into the crucible sooner or later. We do not blindly reject Western theology or ecclesiastic polity. The sanctity of age and birth (such as the theology of Eastern and Western churches may claim)—has long ceased to be a recommendation in politics and the same will be the case in religion. We in the East are renouncing tradition far more ancient or emotionally deep-rooted than churches or theologies. Nor is it safe to assume that ecclesiastics, Eastern or Western, can play the role of leaders in the realm of theology. The sooner we realise that in India the living forces of religion reside in the pew rather than in the pulpit—the better it would be for the growth of Christian life. I mean no disparagement of our pastors. They are excellent men in their own place. But decidedly, they are not leaders of thought.

I have endeavoured to fill in one or two features of the situation which have escaped the attention of the author and estimated the value of some of the forces which have not been in my opinion, correctly assessed. Summing up the situation, we may say that the crucial fact that emerges from the survey is that the missionary has to fight a rearguard action against his own countrymen and that behind in his own country are accumulating forces which are more a menace to the missionary cause than the hardening of opinion against conversions visible in the field. While the East may not be an ally of Christianity, the West may turn to be its implacable enemy. None would be so glad as the writer if this reading of the situation were to turn out to be incorrect. However, the reader can have no difficulty in accepting the warning of the author that the world situation is so rapidly changing that the missionary organisation cannot successfully hope to meet it without being prepared constantly to adjust its outlook and plans, thus keeping pace with a fast moving world. More than this, the urgency of the crisis demands fundamental rethinking and going back to the fountain sources of our faith to replenish our spiritual resources. To put it shortly, in our present predicament, the Lord alone can save—hence to Him cutting through the props of Church, doctrine and dogma.

### THE MALADY AND THE REMEDY

#### DR. KRAEMER'S BARTHIAN STANDPOINT

The book under review presents some difficulties to Indian readers. Throughout, the author adopts the Barthian standpoint alike in the statement of the general philosophic background and in the interpretation of the Christian message. Few Indian readers know Barth, fewer still accept his philosophy and interpretation of Christianity. This, along with some other assumptions to which we will draw attention, provokes a controversial mood and makes many of the views expressed, unacceptable. Karl Barth's insights, flashes of illumination are apparent in his commentaries. His originality and depth of thought are conceded. Nevertheless, Barth is more a prophet than a philosopher. He gives us insights rather than a systematical scheme of thought. Moreover, Barthian philosophy has not reached that assured status and position which justifies the assumption that its criticisms and conclusions are universally acceptable. The Indian Christian naturally looks to Indian philosophy for guidance. The dominant school in India has been the immanentist, idealistic school which seems to be anathema to Barthians. This divergence of philosophic outlook makes the Indian reader take the author's conclusion with reserve. Moreover, there are already different schools of Barth. Barth himself protests in his Commentary on the Romans that his English readers should not identify him with Brunner.

The reviewer's inability to follow Barth arises less on philosophic grounds than on religious. Barth's outlook involves a tacit rejection of the Fourth Gospel and the main ideas that shape its form and content. The possibility of God permanently entering the creative 'order' is not favoured by Barth, his crucial idea being that God always operates on creation 'vertically' and on men by 'crisis'. It is this 'crisis' ideology that the Fourth Gospel discards in the interpretation of the personality of Christ. St. John seems to be decidedly un-Barthian. The intellectual and spiritual leanings in India lie with St. John. The Indian interpretation of Jesus, will certainly 'shape' on the lines of St. John. St. Paul is more 'propitious' to Barth. But there are regions in Pauline theology which Barthians eschew. The 'Holy Spirit'—the doctrine and personality,—if my instincts are sound, will play a

decisive role in Indian theology. They may receive a new interpretation and become the corner stone of Indian Christian theology. I have not read any clear exposition of Barth on the Holy Spirit and His place in evolution. I have no hesitation in saying that Dr. Kraemer's Barthian standpoint has neither rendered the exposition of the theme easier for him nor his conclusion sounder and more acceptable to the reader.

#### AN OUTBURST AGAINST RELATIVISM

To the student of philosophy, Chapter I is of special interest as a study in the spiritual health of the world. Evidently Dr. Kraemer feels that the nations of the Western world are in a bad way. What with the fall of democracies and the rapid rise of dictatorships professing allegiance to systems of political and social order that admit of no power higher than the national will, one may have justification for pessimism. The religious man has always adjudged the world to be under doom, not indeed for sickness but for sin. The mortal sin of the modern world, the parent of all evils of thought and action, according to the learned Doctor, is relativism leading to abandonment of the 'absolute'. In the language and style reminiscent of days when humanists raised the banner of revolt against 'absolutists', Dr. Kraemer calls the faithful to a jihad against relativism. By-the-bye, when did relativity become dignified into an 'ism'—relativism? Relativity, as we know it in physics as propounded by Einstein, is innocent of all guilt, except it be that of the mathematician—unintelligibility to ordinary men. The danger to religion does not come from the scientist but from the borderland exponents who extract a philosophy of life from a science. Biology as a science is no more a danger than physics, Darwin no more than Einstein, Evolution no more than Relativity. But as soon as a science claims the attention of the learned, we get a crop of exponents, neither scientists nor philosophers who create a religion and philosophy out of the science. They have damaged the cause of science and religion sufficiently in the past. We were not aware that these birds of evil omen have gathered round relativity. We had better hopes for it. Relativity is good science. Relativism is pseudo science, false philosophy and questionable religion.

At first sight, one may be surprised to be told that the world is suffering from the want of absolute. The author does not say so. He propounds the view that having aban-



doned the true 'absolute' the world lies under a just retribution of worshipping the false absolute, just as those who do not worship the living God, do bow to idols. All this may be interesting. But is there any justification for this outburst against relativism? Relativism may renounce the 'absolute' God but does not for that reason forego God altogether. The finite God is still God, yea, even so our Lord Jesus Christ. We strongly demur to the inference that those who have lost faith in the absolute have lost faith altogether in God. Who is to judge between the theologian's Absolute and the man's human God? Who, we ask, is to judge between Him who lies beyond our thought, comprehension and capacity and Jesus whose feet at least we can lay hold of, even when we may not recline on his bosom? This quarrel with the relativists is interesting and I join the lists because, in the camp of philosophers, I do not keep company with absolutists and am not ashamed to be counted among the relativists without forfeiting, I hope, the grace of God.

The twin evils of the modern world we are told, are secularism and relativism—with which the author sternly demands of the Church not to have anything to do by way of fellowship or compromise. How strongly the author feels on this point a few extracts will show :

"The outstanding characteristic of our time is the complete disappearance of all absolutes and the victorious but dreadful dominion of the Spirit and attitude of Relativism..... Religion, morality, systems of life, standards and spiritual values, normative principle, social orders are all divested of any absolute character of significance."

"The mortal but hidden wound in the life of hosts of other people is that they are not aware that the fundamental problem for them is their complete lack of absolutes in life, their wholehearted surrender to the dominion of their life by relativism, their fundamental and radical uncertainty of the meaning of life. . . . God has become utterly irrelevant to this world and this life."

"The Gospel of Relativism and Secularism is the autonomy of human spirit and of its intellectual and moral judgment."

"Belief in man as the measure of all things ends in ignoring or denial of God and ultimately in the destruction of man."

"These identity philosophers (Descartes and James) ultimately go back to the concept of the autonomy of man. To-day, this immanentist thinking, with ruthless logic and with not less ruthless honesty, has drawn out its latent consequences as appears in the representatives of existential philosophy."

"Two important consequences have followed the popular acceptance of Secularism and Relativism. The notion has soaked into the general mind that there are evidently more possibilities of religious truth than that offered by Christianity."

"The atmosphere of Relativism and Secularism is manifested in Communism, Fascism, National Socialism."

Thus does the author deliver his broadsides against Relativism and then turn to the Christian with this admonition:—"To be sure, the Christian Church can never have anything to do with this immanentist view of life with its belief in the autonomy of man in which man ultimately is the standard and creator of all truth and norms and values. Whosoever lives under the authority of Christ must denounce it as wholly erroneous." We may take it that the author lays the whip of small cords on the backs of relativists in the name of Barth and existential philosophers. How does the Indian, the Indian Christian, look on this battle of philosophers?

#### PSEUDO ABSOLUTISM OF THE CHURCH

If we strip the argument of all its philosophical terminology, it comes to this, that the modern man is so engrossed with himself and with the attraction of this world that he does not see where God comes in and there are moments in his life when he not only dispenses with God but feels himself a God. This may be so. Why lay the blame at the door of Relativists? Was there ever a time, generation or epoch in the world's history when man did not feel not only like disobeying God but also becoming like God? Did it not begin with Adam himself and will it end till old Adam is no more? Why chastise relativists and scientists for these sins which spring from the very nature of our constitution and does not require their seductions to bring it out? Is the Church free from this sin? Has not Church history demonstrated beyond doubt that in an atmosphere thick with incense

invocations of God, prayers and posturings, the twin evils may grow luxuriantly? Can we imagine a place where God and Christ seem to be really more irrelevant, though the air is rent with loud calls of his name, than a highly dogmatised, doctrinised, ritualised Church? Can we say with any ease of conscience that the first aspirant to the seat of divinity is not the priest? After all, is it a sin to aspire to be God-like or to be one with God? Has not Christ taught us to be perfect like the Father? Did he not make us sons of God like himself? The truth of the matter is, this so-called apostacy of man has always been the refrain of history, its doom, and salvation alike.

Need we neglect history so much as to forget that the earliest and the parent of all pseudo-absolutes is the Church—Christian as well as non-Christian? Whence do we get the idea of the vice-regency of the Pope, the power of the Church to bind and to loose, absolutions—indeed the very birth and growth of the idea of the Khilaphat—except through the Church? The Church has claimed divine rights to itself, next bestowed it on kings. When we talk of relativism being the source of the absolutism of the Dictators, let us not forget that the absolutism of the monarch was the gift of the Church. That astute politician-priest-prophet—a dangerous combination,—Samuel, started this business of the anointed of the Lord, that baneful doctrine which created a liason between the priest and the king and made them both a withering shadow in history. The Greek Church that fraternised with Czars cannot afford to lift its skirts in righteous indignation to escape the mud and mire of communist absolutism. Between false Gods—those of the Church and the State—why make a distinction?

In the fervour of his attack it is to be regretted that Dr. Kraemer has not remembered his jurisprudence well. Every student of British jurisprudence knows that the sovereign in theory and in fact is absolute. Austin who formulated the theory of sovereignty, now recognised as an authority, takes a full volume to drive home the fact that there are or can be no legal limitations to the Sovereign. The Sovereign is above law, unlimited in power, absolute in authority. The Sovereign may be a person or an institution—a king or a parliament, whichever it may be is always absolute. This conception of the Sovereign is partly derived

from the Church and partly derived from the doctrine of divine right of kings—a religious doctrine—partly from theories of contract and delegation of power. The 'absolute' flourished when the Roman Catholic religion was at its glory. The Church was always in holy or unholy alliance with pseudo absolutes in politics. The Russian or Nazi revolution is really no revolution at all, if by revolution we mean reconstitution of life under a radically different idea. Electricity may be said to be a revolutionary discovery because it introduces a radically different power from steam. But British democracy, Russian autocracy, German dictatorship, as well as the medieval Church, bowed their knees to the same political constitution, the absolute power of the Sovereign. During a national emergency all act in the same way. The conscientious objector is either shot or tortured. Civil liberties are all suspended. Private rights are abrogated. Deserters are shot out of hand without trial. The difference between Germany and Britain is not political or constitutional. Germany is always in a state of emergency and employs her absolute powers, while England uses them only on the declaration of a state of national emergency. Thus, it will be seen that the scientist and the relativist are not responsible for dictatorships. A dictator is a modern version of the absolute monarch. The latter was always the Church's darling except when he opposed it. Pseudo absolutes thrived under the shadow of the Church, under the blessing of religion as much, if not more, as dictators thrive under the scientific and relativist regime.

#### IMMANENTALISM NOT FATAL TO RELIGION

The theory is as faulty philosophically as it is politically. Dr. Kraemer draws his inferences exclusively from Western philosophy. If he was acquainted with Indian philosophy, he would have hesitated before he condemned the relativist or exalted the absolutist. For one thing he confuses 'identist' with 'immanentalist.' We see no justification for this even in Western philosophy. In this respect, it is erroneous to classify Descartes with the immanentalist. For another, the author seems to think that immanentalism is fatal to religion. In India we had objectivists, immanentalists, identists. But curiously enough, all of them were religious and none of them tended towards secularism. The religious development in India, which we commend to the study of the

author, will prove a corrective to many of the conclusions in this book. Immanentists in India were always among the true aristocracy of faith. God, felt as resident in the temple of the human heart and felt as the aroma pervading nature, intensified religious consciousness. Devotees of Bakti cults who are our 'objectivists' are no more religious and devoted than our Vedantist who believed in the immanence of God. The identists who asserted 'That Art Thou' are on the whole a chastened people almost prophetic in their religious fervour. Let it be noted that the true identity was not of man with God but of God with man. The first produced intoxications and vanities disastrous to religious growth. The latter sanctified life. St. Paul who said 'I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Gal 2:10) was an identist. Our Lord when he said, 'I and my Father are one' (John 10:30) was affirming a supreme identity. To both, the assertion did not mean the autocracy of man but the highest exaltation of the human spirit. The danger does not come in establishing any relation with God, be it an outer or inner connection or identity. The evil springs from a life which has no God to establish any relation with or a God who stands aloof from life permitting no relationship with man. The former represents scientific atheism, the latter religious atheism. Barthian anxiety to father all evil on 'relativism' does not find justification in Indian experience.

#### ABSTRACT CONCEPT OF THE ABSOLUTE

What is this absolute, we may ask, whose abandonment we are told, causes all the national, individual ills? The absolute of the philosophy expounded by Sankara, Kant and Bradley is an unconditioned, unrelated and changeless reality that which lies beyond thought and comprehension. In India the philosophic absolute and the religious absolute are the same. In this sense the personal can never be absolute, for personality as we know or conceive it, is subject to limitations. Barthians think evidently of a moral absolute as opposed to a metaphysical absolute—a moral perfection of a different category from the human moral consciousness. The formula 'God is God and man is man and the twain can never be one' expresses this meaning. In our use of the term, we generally cross the metaphysical with the moral and reach a highly abstract concept of the 'absolute'. In what sense was Jehovah the absolute? The thunder and smoke, the terror and horror

that surrounded Him drew an impassable gulf between Him and man. With all this He is human, sometimes emotional and has very little of the absolute. Herein lies the supreme excellence of Jesus. He is never the absolute—unapproachable, incomprehensible. Nor did he stand as the absolute to man. Herein the Church has wronged our Lord from the beginning. We have been always anxious to turn him into a God, place him over against us, and worship him. While he wanted to step out of God to be with us in fellowship, ours is a worship which militates against his fellowship. The God who became Man, we are always trying to make into a Man who became God. Our Lord is the measure of the true criticism of the absolute. In his presence we feel the 'relation' of God to us—his nearness and intimacy—rather man His absoluteness, his unattainability. Jesus is not God, the absolute, but God as standing in relation to man—not God who operates vertically and in crisis. The meeting of God and Jesus and his disciples, though critical, was never a crisis ultimately. The harmony and intimacy of the relationship between God, Jesus, sons of God, repels Barthian adjectives.

#### DR. KRAEMER'S REMEDY

If Dr Kraemer is wrong in his diagnosis, he must necessarily be wrong in his prescription of the remedy. The world is neither ruined by relativism nor redeemed by the 'absolute'. The victory over science and relativism may not bring back the reign of true religion. There is more hope for religion if the priest stands with the scientist, than if he opposes him. The priest, as the enchanter or singer of chants, is less a true ally of religion than as an experimenter. What we require today is not going back or walking backward to apostolic times, but a *Upanayana*—opening of eyes. The genius of Jesus has inaugurated a revolution in our conception of the relation of God to man. Judaism always conceived God as a person whose permanent abode is in heaven but who makes visits to men on earth. The Indian doctrine of incarnation goes a step further and proclaims that God not only comes to us occasionally but is born among us for a special purpose. Christianity proceeds much further still. It holds that some part of the divine permanently resides on earth. Christ goes to heaven. The Holy Spirit comes down in his stead. 'Lo I am always with you' does not mean the aid of God from heaven but an installation of God on earth. Even Jesus, orthodox Chris-

tians expect, will descend to rule on earth. His present abode in heaven sitting on the right hand of God does not appear to be permanent. Christianity permanently changes the residence of God. 'Our father which art in heaven' may still be true. But we have to speak of the Holy Spirit that resides in us and with us and of Christ who has gone up only to come back again. This differs radically from Barth's God touching us without touching that is, as the tangent touches the circle. Far from touching, he breaks into history and abides with us. Much of the evil of the world which Dr. Kraemer artlessly attributes to relativism arises from the doctrine of the Church that confined God to heaven. The habit of regarding God as 'Our Father which art in heaven' has done us and our race incalculable spiritual harm. Man regards himself the lord of creation because he places God outside creation. One doubts whether the Church's stress on God in heaven may not be a tactical move for establishing its rule on earth. Should we realise that God resides on earth, there will be a chastening that will put a stop to much of our overweening vanity and overvaulting ambition. Pseudo absolutes will vanish if the real absolute lives on earth and not away in the far distant heaven. In the mouth of the average Christian the pious prayer 'God in heaven' acts as an excuse for behaving as if He does not rule on earth and that he himself may do so.

#### NOT AN ABSOLUTE—BUT EMMANUEL

We feel the author's remedy may, after all, not effect a cure. What we require today is not an absolute in heaven but a 'power greater than we' on earth. Here absolutists do not interpret Christ aright and in consequence view the problems of life in a wrong perspective. We should not throw God beyond the regional attraction of the human heart, beyond the gravitational forces of man's soul. We need as a remedy for our ills—not an absolute—but a God with us 'Emmanuel.' To the extent we succeed in this, to that measure we restore man to his true place on earth, create in him a lively sense of his limitations of intellect and power and a saving sense of subjection to a 'power with us' which will not tolerate neglect or opposition. If the so-called Church has any discernment yet left, it may leave its offerings at the altar and go in search of God in heaven and implore Him in the name of His creation to come and live with us, chastening,

inspiring, ruling and overruling our petty plans and schemes. Will the Church do it? Does it know how to do it? Priestcraft in a noble sense all through the ages, from the miracle-man of the primitive tribes to the miracle man of the holy catholic Church, consists in the claim to bring God down to live with us by their incantation and invocations and prayers. Because the Church has failed to do this and seeks to delude us into the belief that it has done so, the word has gathered the sinister meaning we attach to it.

### CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN FAITHS

It is to be regretted that the chapter dealing with Christian Faith and Ethic is much too perfunctory and inadequate to serve as a guide on a very difficult and complicated problem. The world's extremity prescribes the necessity for a new understanding of Jesus. We have explored the implications of two ideas relating to Jesus, namely, the value of Christhood as propitiation and reconciliation. But neither of these aspects exhausts the historic Jesus and his functions. Today we are face to face with units greater than the individual. It is here that the meaning, significance and relevancy of Christianity does not appear to be clear. We have exhausted in a way the meaning of Christ to the individual. But we have to discover the purpose and achievement of our Lord in the redemption of the social order or in his relation to the cosmic evolution. Such a discovery will also serve the needs of our individual redemption in a deeper and more satisfactory way. The effect of faith in Christ on heredity and the subliminal self has yet to be understood. The present context of history demands urgently that we should rediscover Jesus in the light of our colossal needs. The enquiry bears intimately on the purpose of incarnation and the unveiling of new powers imperatively needed by us in our conflicts in society and State. Today we have to realise Jesus as the head of a new world order; or as the creative expression of God's higher purposes with regard to man. On all these topics we seek in vain for enlightenment. The Christianity we seek to compare not being in itself clear to us, our comparison suffers in clarity and the findings reached are bound to be devoid of any permanent value. The comparison of Christianity as we know it, with non-Christian faiths as we construe them to be, does not yield the true differentia. Nor can we compare with any profit the unknown features and



factors in Jesus with the unexplored potentialities of non-Christian faiths. The supreme gain of comparative study, better still, of the co-living of faiths is in the light they throw on each other and the new phases they disclose. We start to compare and we find that the things to be compared have changed in the process. The negative plate of Jesus developed in a solution of Hinduism brings out hitherto unknown features of the portrait and these may prove exactly the 'Gospel' for our time. The same thing happens to Hinduism when developed in a Christian environment.

#### FIVE ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY

After reading more than once the relevant chapters bearing on the topic, we have to confess that the author gives no clear cut conception of Jesus or Christianity. There is much wisdom of a sort, diffused in the book on issues of a secondary nature, much relevant criticism of the theology of the past with an eulogy of the Barthian theology as a corrective to what are adjudged to be the sins of current and even classic theology. Here and there luminous observations on transcendentalism and immanentism occur. But when we come to the crux of the matter, the magic of Barth does not give us any new keys to the understanding of Jesus. Indeed, while shrewd blows are dealt to philosophic and theological opponents, the lights are put out in the melee, and the household of faith gropes in darkness. It cannot be said that Barth makes Jesus in any sense intelligible. Indeed, Barthians glory in the obscuratation they produce. The idea of God being hid in Jesus is the only dark ray they throw on Jesus. The 'Liberal Jesus' may be too much of a gentleman and the 'Apocalyptic Jesus' too much of an eddy of opposing forces. In the midst of these vicissitudes Jesus at least is visible. In the mystifying light of Barthian theology we fail to see any picture of Jesus at all but in his place we find installed with much flourish of trumpets a 'dissolving Jesus', a Jesus who eludes the eye as well as the heart. This is how the author puts the question and gives the answer :—

"What is the heart of the Christian message? What are the essential and characteristic features of the Christian faith? How are we to describe it? Various ways are possible because the richness of the Gospel is inexhaustible. It is quite legitimate to say: (1) Christianity is the religion of

incarnation.....(2) Another effective way to outline the Christian faith is to say—that it means justification by faith. (3) One is fully justified in saying that Christianity is the religion of reconciliation and atonement.....(4) It is also very appropriate to say that the Christian faith is the announcement of the Kingdom of God.....(5) Christian faith can also be described as a new way and quality of life.”

In this statement of Christian faith, the question suggests itself whether all these ways of defining Christianity can be said to be of equal value and adequacy. Are the five aspects of Christianity each in itself a sufficient statement of the faith like the roads that lead to a city? Or are they descriptions of the outer and inner content of Christianity? The failure to correlate these factors into a coherent whole is a fundamental weakness in the treatment of the topic. It cannot be denied that a study of original documents gives a different impression of the value of the grouping of these elements than the Church or traditional theology does. The Church has exaggerated some of the aspects and brought them to the fore throwing others to the background. They are all in the picture but somehow with different emphasis and values. The Jesus of the Gospel is not the Jesus of the Church. We dare not deny this. While the author refers to the incarnation of Jesus—in itself an un-Biblical expression—and to the Kingdom of God, he makes no use of them in the development of these ideas or in his statement of the relation of Christianity to other religions. This is a Barthian failing. They are strongly doctrinal in spite of their disavowals. They touch lightly on the incarnation of Jesus and on the Kingdom of God. What little they say is enigmatical and mystifying. Barthian theology like its pet aversion, Hegelian philosophy, is difficult to conceive and still more difficult to state. They depend on a ‘dialectic’ which the elect alone understand and the elect are gradually diminishing in number. Such a theology can hardly be a safe anchor for a missionary who has to make clear Jesus to others. If he himself as a faithful Barthian, can hardly form a coherent picture of Jesus, he cannot transmit it to his pagan clientele.

#### THE JURIDICAL AND CREATIVE CONCEPTIONS

The five ways described above fall under two categories of interpretation of Jesus—(i) the juridical, and (ii) the genetic or the creative.

The juridical conception of Christianity is an attempt to reduce Jesus to the ideology of Judaism or the political ideology of the State of Rome : in other words, to interpret Jesus in terms of sacrifice and propitiation or law, offence and punishment. The 'sacrificial' system is a mystery core of religion. Dealing with sacrifices, we may talk with some appropriateness of sin as a stain, and the sacrifice as an eraser of sin by the washing in blood. It should, however, be noted that the effect of sacrifice is mystical and unconscious. No devotee came out of the temple after a sacrifice with a light heart and a joyous sense of redemption. Sacrifice acts as a tragedy. It produces the eerie feeling of midnight and purifies us by terror. We do not *feel* saved; we come with a *faith* that we are saved. But this propitiation-theology stands condemned as an inadequate distortion of truth when we set it side by side with the story in the Gospels. Jesus may have called himself a ransom. John the Baptist may have hailed Jesus as the lamb that taketh away the sin of the world. The Lord's Supper may evoke the mental picture of a lamb broken for the sinner. The Cross may be soul-shattering. Yet, as we accompany Jesus we never get 'the Kalighat' feeling. I do not know how Jews felt when they witnessed sacrifices. I have been to Kalighat. Neither in my studies of the Gospel, nor even in my private devotion, can I capture the feeling that in Jesus I am in a temple where he is sacrificed for me to satisfy a terror inspiring deity. No Indian gets this feeling. Nor do I think any modern has it. This idea of sacrifice is diluted in Western theology with the idea of offence, offender, punishment, hostages. I have never stood in the dock before an earthly Judge. I am a Judge and have seen men in the dock. I realise the solemnity of a court of law, of the majesty of law, of the value of punishment. Yet, once you step out of Church-theology into the atmosphere of the Gospels, we leave behind judges and arraignments, verdicts and punishments. I do not deny that man has a sense of sin and guilt—even a desire to atone for it by suffering punishment. Yet, the nearer I get to the historic Jesus, the farther I go away from the temple and the court-hall. The classic theology distorts Jesus—it invests him with too much terror. It intensifies a tragedy—in all conscience too much for flesh. In the company of Jesus we do not feel criminals somehow. This legal conception by staging the drama entirely in the realm of consciousness has robbed the idea of sacrifice of its subliminal effect. Why should the effect of the Cross be conditioned by

my conscious reaction, by my repentance ? In my experience, sacrifices never operate as punishments do. The former touches or is supposed to touch the basis of life : the other the conscious portion of it—the will and the feeling. An attempt to express the meaning of Jesus in terms of these two ideals is not true to fact, true to the atmosphere of the Gospels—not even true to the Indian experience where it arises fresh and free from original contact with Jesus and not a reproduction of traditional effects which the Church endeavours to create. I want to emphasise that we can never get to the heart of Christianity by the way of juridical theology. It is the genetic or creative aspects of Jesus—It is the Holy Spirit as a creative energy that takes the Indian into the new 'given'—in Jesus.

#### THE RECONCILIATION THEORY

The attempt to interpret Jesus exclusively in terms of justification by faith or reconciliation has resulted in the view of the author that the ultimate effect of the ministry of our Lord was to *restore* humanity or such portion of it as believe in him, to its original condition (i.e.) to its primal stage before fall. The author holds that reconciliation means the restoration of the original, normal order of life in which worship of God and the joyful doing of His will become the natural life. This is also said to be what was achieved by the incarnation. One may legitimately wonder whether this can prove the joyful news for the children of men. The view of life that would implicate men in tragic fall hardly had they commenced their existence and leave them in the wanderings in the wilderness all through history appals the imagination. What can we say to the Gospel which limits the totality of Christ's achievement to a restoration of man to the original condition ? This reconciliation and restoration can only be the new start for life and not its positive content. Is there any new advance for man in Jesus beyond regaining the ground lost ? One must confess that Dr. Kraemer touches rather gingerly the positive aspects of life in Christ. The Incarnation in its significance for the destiny of man ; the Kingdom of God as a new world order to be evolved out of the present existence ; the Holy Spirit as the new cosmic creative energy—receive rather disappointing treatment, possibly by reason of the Barthian theology adopted. Incarnation, we are told, is the advent of an incognito God. Barth emphasises that in the Incarnation

God touches the world as the tangent touches the circle—touching without touching. He also says that Jesus acts as a bomb in history. He does not enter into it taking his place in the creation but only tears the texture of history and creates a void. It is only when Jesus leaves history that we realise that he ever entered the world from above. The Historic Jesus while he lived and taught, fought and died, does not reveal God. But when he ascends into heaven, we feel that it was he who descended into earth. I find an indirect approval of this view in the quotation of John 1: 9, 10, with emphasis on 'the world did not recognise Jesus'. But should we not in justice to St. John quote also that 'we *beheld* in Jesus the glory of the only begotten Son' John 1: 14. What becomes then of the tangent and bombhole theory?

#### A NEW ORDER IN CREATION

Dr. Kraemer does not seem to be aware of the fact that the doctrine of incarnation is not peculiar to Christianity and that Hinduism had a fully developed theory as old as, if not older than Christianity. Would he be surprised to know that the Barthian view, instead of marking the *sui generis* of Christianity is dangerously akin to the Hindu view? For in Hinduism God incarnates when the constitution of the world is threatened, and comes not to be with us always, but to restore the mechanism of life to its original condition. One should have thought that the Christian conception is something more than this. The fact of Christ is the birth of a new order in creation. It is the emergence of life—not bound by Karma; of man, not tainted by sin, not humbled by death; of man triumphant, glorious, partaking the immortal nature of God; of a new race in creation—sons of God. If Jesus is not all this, what else could he be? A mere visitor from heaven, who, moved by his love, made a supreme sacrifice and then went away to his place on the right hand of God? Is he not Emmanuel, God permanently residing in the creation—the answer to the prayer of man to transcend his destiny? If the Incarnation is the answer to our ambition and not to our infirmities—then humanity has a future, a new future more in accord with its aspirations.

The same fear to identify Jesus with man gives rise to another curious view that the new world order is an expectation and a longing for the Christian and not a present possi-

bility because of the birth of Jesus as the Son of Man and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. That the Kingdom of God is not yet, that death still rules, that for all our faith and hope the Christian's is a life beset with infirmities is too sad a reality. But is this so because we have missed something essential in Jesus or because it is ordained that the new life should be an expectation not to be realised by us but to be given by God in his own time? Jesus is not the window through which we behold the new Sons of Man as in a vision. He is the Son of God and we can be and ought to be sons of God now and here—not in the far off future. I am afraid this conception of the Kingdom of God not as a development of the world order but something which will descend from heaven when Christ comes, seems to be not only a primary heresy but also a present tragedy. It has postponed our appropriation of Jesus as a present reality. It converts Christianity into a religion of repentance, not a rebirth. To be born again is Christianity and the new-born is the son of God and the order he evolves—the Kingdom of God. India longs to learn the secret of this new birth which transcends Karma. If we cannot give it, we are offering her sand and ashes calling it loudly, divine food.

The constant repetition of the phrase, "the Radical Biblical Realism" adds to the obscurity of the treatment of the subject. What this phrase means, I am unable to discern even after much thinking. Dr. Macnicol who revised the text should have substituted some intelligible phrase for it. It is neither a philosophical nor a theological phrase and it is used throughout the book as a 'mantra' against theological opponents and non-Christian philosophies. The book would have gained in intelligibility if a paragraph explaining the phrase had been added.

#### SOME BARTHIAN AXIOMS

To make matters worse, the Barthian outlook is applied to the study of the problem and this has added considerably to the mystification of the topic especially of Christian ethics.

Barthians adopt the Semitic theology and discard the Aryan. May this be one reason for their banishment from Nazi Germany? They are really Musalmans and Jews in their metaphysics and theology. As an Aryan I differ from them

as much by natural inclination as by positive conviction, for I hold that the Semetic outlook is not that of Jesus : the value of Jesus lies in his having transcended it. Barthians repeat with perfect sincerity the creed 'that God is God and Man is man and the twain can never meet.' The heresy they fight against is the tendency which ranges God with men ; which acclimatises the creator in creation. In a sense they outdo the Semitic in this respect. This is really why the incarnation is not the prolongation of the creative order and Christ does not carry history further. The notion that God is ' I am that I am ' has led the Jew to the postulation of the relation of God to man as consisting in laying down law in the sense of commands. God rules us by commands. This leaves God's sovereign supremacy untouched in all his dealings with man. When we meet Him, we realise the impassable gulf and not our nearness. The Jewish priest resented the idea of God's personal dealings with the prophet, though much of God's personal commands to the prophets was political rather than spiritual. The priest guarded the majesty and awfulness of God. The prophet by constant communion with God (though entirely by means of commands) impaired the sense of remoteness and strangeness of God. In calling God the Father, Jesus abolished rulership by divine legislation. Hence the perpetual feud between the priest and the prophet—till the former vanquished the latter.

Whatever value the transcendence of God might have, one fails to see any justification for the transcendence of Jesus. The primary error which deflected the true current of thought as to Jesus began when we set him along with God over against man and made him exclusively the object of worship. This, one cannot help feeling, is a total distortion of the purpose, and the meaning of the message of Jesus, though arising out of devotion and piety. The Incarnation has its spear head towards creation. To turn it round and make it face heaven is to reverse its purpose. Confusion is due to the use of the word incarnation—an unbiblical term. In the company of Jesus we do not feel the gulf that separate God from man. We feel he is the bridge, the hyphen that unites God and men. His own consciousness reveals the total lack of this sense of separation and his teachings do not emphasise the awful gulf between God and man. Else, our Lord would not have bid us to be perfect like God. The desire to be like God was the sin of Adam but the virtue of the Christian. The

emphasis on 'the Son' in the 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man' is illuminating. Jesus is not God and is not Man, but is the Son of God and the Son of Man. The word 'Son' indicates the measure of unity—something less than complete identity with God but something more than difference in category—between God, Jesus, and the Christian. God is God. Man is Man. The twain have met in Jesus: not merely met, but fused and mingled into one. Hinduism always longed for a state in which we could say as Jesus did, 'I and my Father are one'—which was our Lord's affirmation of the *Brahma Vakyam Aham Brahmasmi*. It may be, in the mouth of a mere man, the assertion is a travesty. In Jesus it was, for the first time in history an accomplished reality, not an unrealised aspiration. India will not be afraid of claiming Jesus as belonging to our race as the head of humanity, as the Son of Man. This is the message of Christianity that the Word has become flesh and God has become man. Let there be no Barthian nervousness about it. To be Christian is to gain this consciousness and this sense of harmonious blend with the divine. The incarnation is as much what man is to become as what God has become. To claim this oneness with God in the Aryan sense may be blasphemy to a Jew but seems to be the essence of being Christian. Jesus then is not a bomb, but a birth, not a tangent but the radius.

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HISTORY

Another pet theory of Barth is that the Kingdom of God is not history but the transcendence of it. There has been too ready acquiescence in philosophy with the scientific view of evolution which Barth rightly criticises, namely that the atom and the germ contain all that the world is and may be. Man is a perfected biped, the unfolding of the potentialities of the beast. The view that the higher is not merely a fuller expression of the lower but the result of the ingress of a new factor ingested into the old may be philosophically more acceptable. But to swing to the other extreme and hold that the new does not continue the old can hardly be satisfactory. Man is not a perfect animal nor is he a separate and unconnected line of development. So also Jesus is not perfected man. He transcends man. He is without sin, without stain, without inner strife. He is without decay and death. He is full of power—benevolent power that eternally renews itself. He has eternal life. But for all this he is the new man—man



without Karma. You cannot and should not detach him from the chain of humanity and throw him back into the eternal mystery beyond creation. The Kingdom of God is a new world order, expressing a new cosmic power—the Holy Spirit. Still it recreates man—world and heaven. The Kingdom of God is a continuation of the world, but not merely a larger edition of it. This is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Utopias of science. The new world of science is the working out of the energies of the world. The Kingdom of God works out the power of the Holy Spirit. The Barthian looks on it not as something which Christ has brought but something which he will bring. In fact Jesus was the man in the Kingdom of God—the essential part of the new creation. Barth develops a Christianity in which God, Jesus, the Kingdom of God hover over man and the world—attracting us but never touching our world order or becoming part of it. Jesus never gives us this impression.

#### THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC

The difficulties of Barthian theology gather head in the conception of Christian Ethics. In the Report of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, Prof. Brunner is said to have maintained that we should not identify the Christian ethic with the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount and that it is doubtful whether we ought to speak of a Christian ethic at all, since for the Christian faith the good is understood in a way which means that it can never be formulated as a fixed programme of human action. This strikes an Indian, Christian or non-Christian, as an intriguing view of ethics. The danger of the Sermon on the Mount being accepted as a programme of human action in the West is so remote that admonitions of this nature appear to be altogether unnecessary. The point developed is that Christian ethics depends so much on Christian faith (i.e.) on the Christian conception of God and His will that it should be regarded as individualistic and not in the light of principles having independent existence in human nature or system. One fails to get this impression on reading the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes strike us rather as universal principles or laws grounded, if not in the existing order of things, at least in an anticipated order. They do not call for anything like individual devotion to God or Christ. In one aspect the Sermon on the Mount is a summation of the basic

principles of human life. The Western is impressed with the unfamiliarity of the Sermon on the Mount to his accustomed mode of action, but to the Indian it appears to be natural. I do not suggest that the Hindu is prone to love his enemy cheerfully or naturally, but not having been used to demand an eye for an eye or tooth for a tooth, the counsel does not appear to be unnatural or extravagant.

#### INDIA AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

In another aspect the point has special interest to India at this juncture. We are intensely concerned with the experiment of Mahatma Gandhi to fashion a national programme, political and social, based on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, compendiously described as the doctrine of Ahimsa. It is well known that the intelligentsia in India are profoundly affected by two streams of Russian thought—one reaching India through Tolstoi and the Mahatma, forming the foundation of a new social outlook which builds national life on love and non violence and the other reaching us through Jawaharlal Nehru intimately connected with the social reconstruction of national life on communistic doctrines. Mahatma Gandhi's attempt is to detach the Christian principles from the personality of Jesus and make them instruments of social and political reconstruction. This attempt has a good and worthy tradition. Christian ethics first impressed Raja Ram Mohan Roy and since his days it has been acting as a social ferment, starting a long train of reforms within Hinduism. But the ethical influence of Christianity never reached anything like a wide scale operation nor was regarded as a definite principle of construction instead of criticism, till Mahatma made his first experiments with it in South Africa. The Christian Church in India has been following this movement with hope, joy and fervent prayer as the first application of Christian principles to units larger than the individual. At present Mahatma Gandhi is engaged in a daring experiment to apply the Sermon on the Mount to one of the most refractory problems of modern India—the communal problem. The Indian Christian sends his prayers to the throne of Grace that he may succeed.

It is somewhat disconcerting just as we are entering on an enterprise for whose success the world looks forward with sympathy and prayer to be told that the Sermon on the Mount should not be regarded as ethical principles capable of social

and national application. We do not deny that faith in Christ should appropriately go with the Christian ethic. But we cannot subscribe to the view that the Christian ethic should not be adopted by those who may not accept dogmatic Christianity. The teachings of Christ so far as they enunciate principles of human conduct, can operate apart from his personality. Indeed, in India, the process of expansion of Christianity seems to be from ethics to personality. We should ill serve the cause of Christ to arrest the movement. What Prof. Brunner said at Oxford, Dr. Kraemer repeats in his book in the following passages: "The Kingdom of God is a transcendental, supra-historical order of life. The identification of the so-called Christian social order, Christian State or Christian culture with the Kingdom of God signifies making what is by its nature relative absolute and making the absolute relative...Therefore the Kingdom of God can never be realised in any social, economic, political or cultural order. Whoever expects more confuses the relative realities of life with the realm of God's will that is not to be realised but works as a ferment and an explosive in these relative spheres." "The besetting sin of the Christian Church in all ages has been legalistic and rationalistic maltreatment of the New Testament."

Do we hear in these passages the triumphant note of a conquering faith which would overcome death and pull down principalities or the anti-climax of all Christian claims born out of a defeatist mentality? Looking at these wails and woes from the midst of a task to drive home the ethics of the Mount into the social and political consciousness of our race, we cannot imagine of a more feeble exposition of Christian faith. If the Kingdom of God cannot be realised on earth, now as we live, if the new birth as children of God cannot take place amidst the relative realities of life, what, we ask, is left of the Gospel? What is it you are going to preach to the Hindu and for what purpose are we going to ask him to renounce his faith? For the pursuit of the chimera of the absolute? For chasing after a Kingdom of God which can never be realised? For aspiring after a Jesus who though born as we are of a human mother can never be attained by us? Is it not an irony that after beating the big drum of the superior claims of Christianity, to announce a religion too absolute to be realised in this relative world? Realisation has been the heart and soul of the Indian view of spiritual life. Are we to

preach the supreme Gospel of the non-realizability of God and Jesus?

### THE THEORY OF GOD'S WILL

Dr. Kraemer attacks the problem of Christian ethics from a different standpoint. He discovers the uniqueness of the Christian ethic in its being theocentric. While non-Christian ethic is eudaemonistic (i.e.) search after *summum bonum* of life, the highest happiness of man, the Christian ethic arises out of the desire to fulfil God's will—whether it brings happiness or not. This statement like others contains a great measure of truth but fails to do justice both to the Christian ethic and non-Christian. This can be brought out by asking what is God's will? and How do we know it?

In the Old Testament, God's will is declared by God in a code of commandments as in the case of the Ten Commandments, thus affording an objective norm to which the human will has to conform. In the exposition of the Christian ethic as we find it in this book, the line is always drawn between nature and the norm to which nature has to accommodate. What is rejected by implication is the idea that ethics could be the essential expression of life. On the other hand the Christian ethic should have the Kantian categorical imperative—'oughtness'—a sense of compulsion. This demand is satisfied in ethics considered as God's commandments. But then the idea of God issuing commandments to men to declare His will is purely a legalistic idea—which is supposed to be the besetting sin of the Church in all ages. The decalogue arose in a theocracy which is itself the idea of God being ruler, the earthly ruler of the Jewish tribes. If God is to rule, he must lay down the law. But this conception of a theocratic state is neither the highest nor the best. In the prophets, we see a God still dictating His political commands after monarchy arose. Kings ruled—God overruled through his prophets. It should not be forgotten in our enthusiasm for this type of ethics, that in the actual content of God's messages to the prophets, there was very little of ethics. They are mostly political advice—criticism of the State policy and programme. What little ethics prophets produce comes as a mysterious byproduct. But if we replace the King-Subject idea of God's relation to man by the Father-Son idea, the declaration of God's will by commands or by even express statement becomes

obsolete. The son gets to know the father's will less by communication and more by communion. In our Lord's life, we do not find that his father declared to him his will formally. The knowledge of God came out of speechless communion in which we fail to discern any 'oughtness.' We have an interesting parallel in the Mahratta saints of whom Tukaram may be taken as an example. He was a devotee of Panduranga. Like all Bakti saints, he transcended caste and realised a brotherhood. What this means only those who have lived in India and have felt the omnipotence of caste can realise. Yet Tukaram got no command from his God to love his brethren. Nor did he derive the brotherhood of man from the fatherhood of God. He communed with Panduranga and he felt as the result, this new outflow of love to his fellow beings. Here is an action discerningly Godly without the process of conscious search for God's will. Our ethics is in essence not a norm, but an outflow of *life*—not oughtness but 'is' ness. Thus ethics as God's will may be a theological exaggeration of a religious phenomena common to Christianity and other faiths.

The practical difficulty does not lie in the acceptance of the Christian conception of ethics but in ascertaining God's will in the concrete circumstances of life. The laws of the State are codified and are made available to the citizen. But the laws of God are not so easily accessible. The so-called divine laws do not strike us as highly ethical when we look at them from our present state. We cannot maintain that the Ten Commandments or Code of Manu represent a high level of moral conduct. If we reject the Sermon on the Mount, Christianity does not present any commandment as the will of God. The Sermon on the Mount does not contain God's Commandments. The Christian can only know the will of God by communion. It is here that the root difficulty arises. The prophet received messages on every concrete political situation. He got them unasked. In the clear consciousness of their absolute truth, he was able to defy the might of kings and wrath of enemies. He was invariably justified by the event. With the normal Christian and the Church, the trouble is otherwise. The voice of the Lord neither comes to them unasked or when asked. We cannot delude the world that we possess the key to God's will. What then is the value of the claim that the unique feature of Christian ethics lies in the knowledge of God's will? Just now we have escaped a world war by a hair's breadth. The church was

not conspicuous by its declaration of God's will on the occasion. It is impossible to imagine that in a similar situation a prophet in Israel would have lacked the word of God. Nor is the world convinced that the Christian Church at any stage after it entered the West, commanded the means to know the will of God for any given occasion. We can know the will of God in the declarations of Jesus.

#### THE NEW LIFE AFTER REBIRTH

Apart from the Sermon on the Mount and a few sayings of the Lord, we cannot get any guidance for our social, economic, and political problems from reading the Bible. We cannot by imitating Jesus get the necessary enlightenment for the problems of our day. God does not speak to us as He did in the days of the prophet. We have no ready access to Him and He does not answer our questions. We have lost faith in witches, necromancers, mediums who pretend to know the will of God. What then is the use of this empty boast that ours is a theocentric ethics depending entirely on the knowledge of the will of God? What appeal can this impracticable claim make on the Hindus? We cannot expect them to take the Church at her own valuation. They are, whatever they may not be, a shrewd lot. They can see through us and our pretensions. The truth of the matter seems to be that we are bound to be caught in this vicious circle so long as we regard Christian ethics as an external standard of conduct. Man cannot be expected to act by constant reference to his Maker or to his scriptures. The beast acts by its instinct and the man by his impulses. Neither involves external imposition of a standard. Conduct is after all a mode of life. Since the rational principle in man operates on an animal basis, there is a conflict in the life force and a dichotomy of man's life into higher and lower, ensues. The Holy Spirit when it turns man into a Son of God remoulds his life entirely. In the new life after rebirth there are no internal conflicts or external demands but merely spontaneous outflow of action. We love our enemies not against the grain of our nature nor from obedience to the extraneous will of God but because that happens to be the natural expression of the new life. The secret of Christian ethic does not arise from any new mode of appreciation or insight but from new creative life which is the first and last distinction between Christianity and other religions.

### FEATURES OF HINDUISM

Let us now see how Dr. Kraemer understands and interprets non-Christian religions and naturalism. He covers a very wide ground and includes in his survey Buddhism, Islam, and natural philosophies of the West which offer a substitute for religion. I know a little of Hinduism in theory and practice; of Buddhism I have a knowledge derived from books; of Islam I know but very little. So I shall examine the author's interpretation of Hinduism. The analysis of Hinduism is penetrating and at times incisive. But at every turn a want of inside knowledge of Hinduism is a serious handicap. The description of Hinduism, its peculiar features and outlook is correct in itself but suffers from the lack of living touch with the present day forces. Distinctions are drawn that do not matter much when we are concerned with the problem of the uniqueness of Christianity which alone can form the basis for preaching and propaganda.

Dr. Kraemer perceives three distinctive features in Hinduism—features also discernible in all Asiatic and indeed in all non-Christian religions, except Islam and Judaism. First, they represent a totalitarian outlook on life. This is explained as the 'conception of totality and of unbroken primeval unity which comprises and dominates the whole range of reality in nature and in human life with all its distinctions, nuances and correspondences. With this attempt to understand life is contrasted the analytical, dissective method of teaching truth adopted by science. An essential characteristic of this concretely monistic and synthetic thinking is that there are no really antagonistic and opposite principles and realities—but only contrasts. In this way of apprehending life, everything is relative—interrelated. Problems of conflict are solved by assigning the conflicting elements to their places in a cosmos conceived to be consisting of the harmony of elements. If we dig deeper, we are told the reason for the monism is that all non-semitic thinking is naturalistic and vitalistic—naturalistic because man is identified with nature and vitalistic because the search is for the discovery of the immanent vital urge of the universe—a quest for noble, imperishable life. Naturalistic monism is conceived to be the dominant trait of religions of which Hinduism is a fair sample. Primitive apprehension of existence stands entirely outside and opposite to Biblical rea-

lism, with its radical insistence that God is God, the Living Lord and the Creator of man and the world in which sin is regarded as disobedient human will and its resistance against the pure and perfect divine will.

#### CHRISTIAN MONISM

Is there any justification for this separation of the two methods of apprehending reality as acceptable and unacceptable? Is the distinction drawn justified by the facts of religion? In my opinion it breaks on both sides. What is described as Biblical Realism is characteristic of Judaism and not of Christianity. It becomes the characteristic of Christianity only when you cast Christianity in the mould of Judaism—the besetting sin of Barthians. Christianity also looks forward to a harmony in the future, if not in the past. It is committed to a view of life in which God, man, and universe form a harmonious interdependent whole—a world in which man does not always disobey and God will not always ‘judge’. The occasion to judge may pass away with the tendency to disobey. Does Christianity, and this is the crux of the whole question, always conceive God, Man, Universe as separate, irreducible entities capable only of inter-relation, but never a deeper unity than that? Dr. Kraemer is disposed to answer ‘Yes’. We think this result is reached by steadily eliminating from Christianity features which do not fit in with Judaism—a capital and unpardonable error, since the process drains Christianity of the very new enrichment which Jesus brings to life. In St. John’s conception of the tree and branches, in St. Paul’s and John’s idea of ‘Living in Christ’ and ‘Christ living in us’, in the symbolism of the Eucharist, we have the clearest possible indication that Christianity does not affirm the dogma that God is God with the absoluteness of Islam and Judaism.

Then again this view can only be maintained by disannexing Jesus from humanity and identifying him with God. If we concede that Jesus has God value, God has become man and ceased to be the absolute unless Jesus by the process becomes the absolute. To make Jesus the absolute is to misinterpret him. Above all, the idea of ‘Sonship’ sanctioned and sealed by Jesus is again an emphatic abrogation of the eternal distinction between God and man and the affirmation of union—not of substance but of personality. This is not



the place to criticise the Biblical realism which is taken as the yard stick of measurement in the treatise. But this much we may say that unless we overthrow the fourth Gospel, purge St. John and St. Paul of their mysticism, start on an unintelligible theory of incarnation, do violence to the 'consciousness' of Jesus, relegate to the background the 'Holy Spirit,' it is not possible to accept the 'Radical Biblical Realism' as fully descriptive of Christianity. It describes fairly well the plight of humanity when the drama of redemption began but does not give a faithful picture of the result of the redemptive process. Immanent monism in some sense or other seems to be an element in any satisfactory conception of the ultimate destiny of man and immanence a characteristic feature of the process also. In the doctrine of the trinity accepted by the Church, we have a monism of personality as opposed to monism of substance favoured by philosophy. The idea, that Jesus the man could be the second person in trinity even after the incarnation, is itself a recognition that humanity can be incorporated into the essence of Divinity. Again, the idea that three persons distinguishable numerically are at heart one... is a type of monism, however much we may strive against the logic of the conclusion. The trinity is Christian Monism.

Nor can we say that these generalisations are true of Hinduism. The author mentions Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja but does not seem to be aware of Sri Madhva and Madhvism, a branch of Vishnavism more after the heart of the author. Madhvism denounces all monism with bell, book and candle. God, Man and the world in this system never attain a relationship other than inter-relationship. They remain what they are for ever. Here then is a large area of Hinduism which violently repudiates Monism and Maya.

#### HINDUISM NOT MONISTIC

It is not accurate at all to characterise Hinduism as monistic and naturalistic. In a sense the Vedic Gods are powers of nature. Critics have also held that nature in the Vedas is presided over by Gods who are regarded as real personalities and not personifications. Dr. Kraemer observes that Vedic Gods have disappeared and Siva and Vishnu are not Vedic Gods. He has, however, missed the true significance of this fact. With the disappearance of Vedic Gods, Hinduism ceased to be naturalistic. Siva and Vishnu are real Gods in the

sense in which Jehovah was. They are irreducible, ultimate Lords of life and death. They are not nature Gods, but Gods of nature. The taint of nature worship has passed from Hinduism with the disappearance of Vedic Gods. The Upanishads are part of the revelation of Vedas. It is the Upanishads that have influenced the development of Hinduism more than the Rig Veda. The anomaly felt by the author does not therefore exist. The *Shruti* still dominates Hinduism. The characterisation of Hinduism as monistic is very inapt. Sankara's system cannot be called monistic, though such an impression is created by Orientalists comparing it with the monisms of the West. Sri Sankara does not hold that creation emanates from *Brahman*. His philosophy represents really the opposite pole. St. Paul says, 'Let God be true but every man a liar', (Rom. 3: 4). Sri Sankara says, Let God be real, even if we have to hold creation to be unreal. Indeed we have no monism in the sense that the variety of life is reduced into an ultimate principle. Neither Advitism nor Visistadvitism nor Dwaitism propounds it. It has no place in Bhakti religion which represents the live Hinduism. Puranic Hinduism no doubt traces the evolution of Gods and men from the primordial. But it does not resolve except at critical periods of creation—the variety of life into God. It is a false notion that a monistic beginning or end, really affects the value of plurality in the process. Science derives the whole evolution from some primeval slime. But it is absurd to say that this beginning in any way affects the recognition in practical life that nature, animal and man are different and distinct. In practical life the God whom the Hindus worship is real, objective and dominating as Jehovah was. The fact that these Gods arose from a common source in some remote past does not influence the inter-relations of God and man. There has been always a pure stream of theism running throughout Hinduism. The great prestige of Advitism diverted this current now and then and produced Sivadvitam and Visistadvitam. But on the whole Siva and Vishnu resisted the seductions of philosophy and remained the personal absolute of Bhakti religion. One noticeable effect of Advitism is the recognition of *Sayujya*—i.e. absorption into Godhead. By this process it is man that loses his personality and God remains sovereign. *Sayujya*, the dissolution of man in God, is the reverse of the immanentalism of the West which dissolves God in humanity.

## THE DILEMMA OF BHAKTI CULTS

Since Otto wrote his *Indian Religion of Grace and Christianity*, the Christian apologist is presented a problem, perplexing and intriguing. Both Dr. Otto and Dr. Kraemer have essayed to solve the dilemma. We may say that they do not return from the problem with the same assurance with which they enter it. Here is a religion with an objective God real, over-ruling, protecting and fatherly. Here is also the sense of sin so intensely felt as to demand an urgent and imperative escape from its degenerating influence. Here is salvation not achieved by acts but attained purely by the Grace of God. Such is the faith developed within Hinduism in which the Christian meets many of his dogmas and doctrines. How are we to explain a living faith like this? We are told that there are differences. Of course, there are. The idea of sin does not come from a sense of transgression and rebellion. We do not meet the conception that sin created an unbridgable gulf between God and man. Reconciliation is not effected by the Cross: the suggestion of atonement is not to be found even remotely. We see sin without transgression, grace without sacrifice. The point is not whether there are differences but whether the differences constitute superiority or inferiority or whether the differences are such in value and weight as to justify rejecting one and accepting the other. Does not the difference justify only the inference of a different kind of revelation? The European differs from the Asiatic in colour, features, culture, character. But we do not accept that one is superior to the other, and that one culture should be replaced by another for the good of the world.

Dr. Kraemer finds the true ground of difference in the discovery that in spite of appearances, Bhakti religion is not theocentric, its ethics does not depend on the will of God, its God is merely a God-idea, and that the monistic naturalism forms its basis. We have already dealt with this aspect. But the real answer is that nobody can read the lives of Bhakti saints without realising that these distinctions are not true and real. The Indian Bhakta may not have regarded God as a King, but he did regard him as one whose heart is love. It is easier to conclude that the purely historic setting of Christianity was as the enactment of a drama whose purpose

has been realised in different ways in India. The well developed Bhakti cults are post Christian. May it not be that the reconciliation between God and man in the drama of the Cross and Resurrection was reenacted with a different *dramatis personae* and motif and language yet producing the same end or objective. God manifested His salvation through Jesus and the salvation is being achieved by the transplantation of this achieved object in different lands and peoples. There were pre-visions of coming salvation in all races and why should not there be appropriations of the purpose of the incarnation by agencies other than those historically connected with Jesus? This is merely a suggestion. It may not be satisfactory altogether. But we cannot deny that God accomplishes his purpose in mysterious ways. Any way, the real difficulty that presents itself is, once we concede that which we call a sense of sin can be got rid of and this has been done, we cannot impress on the Hindu and make him realise that the Christian way is the only way. We must seek for the supreme claims of Jesus in regions other than reconciliation and salvation.

Still the question remains what is Hinduism? The whole amorphous mass receives coherence and shape if we reply that it is the Indian way of escaping the dominant and unalterable limitations of life occurring in endless cycles of birth and death, i.e., Karma—the principle of birth, growth, death; Sri Buddha answered the question scientifically by the destruction of the desire—the power behind birth and death. Sri Sankara by a regression to the source of life before creation began; the Bhakti movement by surrender to God; the Gita by action without attachment. This is the negative path. Positively, Hinduism seeks as other religions do, including empirical Christianity, to develop the latent possibilities of man and to develop a perfect man. It is believed that if we work out all the latent powers of man, man will cease to be—just as if we work out all coal mines, there will be no coal. The positive and negative methods put an end to the repetition of life under the bondage of Karma. In one word, in Jesus, God created the new man: in Hinduism God is sought for perfecting the old man.

#### WHAT IS THE RELATION OF HINDUISM TO CHRISTIANITY?

Under the head of the problem of Natural Theology, we find an interesting discussion which serves as an introduction

to the topic. Did God deal with men in the non-Christian faiths? If so what is the relation of His revelation in Christ to His earlier revelations? After rejecting the attempt of Aquinas to blend natural theology and Christian revelation, the author turns to Barth and returns with disappointment. He naturally realises the preoccupation with 'pure doctrine, and the refusal to enter into the question of general revelation, does not help the worker called upon to face other religions, daily. The conclusion arrived at is that general revelation can henceforth only mean that God shines revealingly through the works of His creation, through the thirst and quest for beauty, through the conscience and the thirst and quest for goodness, which throbs in man even in his condition of forlorn sinfulness. This disappointing conclusion avoids rather than answers the question. What we have to answer is whether God has dealt with man in the past and if He did, have His dealings any bearing on Christian revelation? To put it more pointedly, is the sense of union with God, the sense of His love and guidance and above all the assured sense of salvation felt by non-Christian Bhaktas—from God? God may deal with us on many matters which have no bearing on the religious issues. He might have taught Moses how to build a tabernacle. He might have guided the prophets how to face a political situation. We are not concerned with these nor with art and conscience.

If we take the 'revelation' claimed in different religions, we have to confess that they do not piece together or form an intelligible whole. The Vedas, the Koran, the Gospel do not make a coherent scheme. They do not even answer the same question. An impartial student is moved to a healthy scepticism of revelation and entertain doubts whether God reveals, apart from creation and whether true revelation is not a creative act. Revelation is not knowledge inaccessible to man. There is precious little of that type of knowledge in the so-called relations. God's dealings in various religions have been negatively to give 'salvation' in the sense of redemption from sin or positively to draw out the potentialities of man. If we do not recognise this or if you maintain that this has occurred only in Christianity, we wander in the wilderness. Where exactly Dr. Kraemer puts special revelation in Christ (i.e.) in reconciliation and redemption—it does not lie. Reconciliation and redemption are part of the general revelation accomplished by God in many ways in history. The special

revelation lies in the creative progress of life in Jesus. What is new in creation and therefore new to every religion is the coming of Jesus as a new Man—Man without Karma. This Dr. Kraemer misses because of his devotion to 'Doctrine'.

The prevailing view among the orthodox missionaries of an earlier generation was that non-Christian religions are a vast decaying degrading section of the spiritual life of mankind. There are various grades in this belief which it is unnecessary to examine. The author rightly rejects the view as no longer tenable. It was born in ignorance and bigotry and cannot survive the light of knowledge. Nor can we grade religions, according to Christianity the highest place. Every religion is a circle complete and perfect in itself. Though not consciously, yet in fact, they start with a quest which they more or less achieve. Religions are really incomparable. At any rate, we have no principle, reasonable and acceptable, which can be applied to evolve a calculus of religions.

The theory that all religions are substantially the same and are roads leading to the same goal though held by some of the most intellectual of religious leaders in India, has to be taken more as a token of goodwill and a hope for brotherliness of religions, than as a serious proposition, capable of proof. Religions must have a common basis, just as all men must have a skeleton. But that does not constitute the equality of men, nor account for all the richness and variety which constitutes life. Nor is the goal of different religions the same. The Semitic who longs for being 'born again' and the Aryan who seeks to escape birth, have their faces set in opposite directions. They are impressed by life differently. Another popular theory that all other religions are training grounds leading to Christianity has not much to recommend it. St. Paul calls 'Law' the school master. But it is a strange theory which holds that the agnosticism and nihilism of the Buddhist, the Nature worship of the Vedas and the tribal cult of Jews are training grounds to a perception of Christianity. The great School Master could never have taught his non-existence to Buddha or if Christ is the highest revelation, failed to inform Prophet Mohammed of it. After Christianity, there could not have been any room for Divine Pedagogy.

#### THE FULFILMENT THEORY

While we do not agree with the summary dismissal of the fulfilment theory which it has received in the hands of the

author, Christianity as the crown of Hinduism does appear unsatisfactory. One main ground for rejecting this idea is that non-Christian religions not only register longings and aspirations but also satisfactions. The facile presumption that in Hinduism we have search for salvation without satisfaction and that Christianity satisfies the longing is untrue to fact. The same persons who reveal the longing testify to the satisfaction. Unless we disbelieve their testimony, we cannot reject their experience. If we have no faith in their testimony, you cannot expect them to take your assertion that you are saved on faith. Moreover, the supreme longing of the 'Hindu' to escape from *Samsara*—Christ does not satisfy and the Lord's gift of rebirth does not appeal to the Hindu. Thus the correspondence of longing and satisfaction fails. It is by no means easy to discover elements in other faiths which find fulfilment in Jesus. When these elements are found out, it will be seen they do not receive any great emphasis in those faiths. The texts, which early Christians said, found fulfilment in Jesus are not the Messianic proof texts of Judaism. A similar difficulty in the case of Hinduism is glossed over by the exponents of this view. Jesus kindles new hopes not felt before and kills some of the deepest and persistent longings of man. In this region 'fulfilment' has no relevancy. Nevertheless, if Christianity is the summation of the creative process, we should expect tendencies and processes spread all over the religious field pointing towards the expected advent of a new age. As the prophet foresaw what was to come, the Seer and the Saint also must have had prevision of the Redemption to Come.

One important aspect of the problem is often overlooked. In all religions there is a residue of unfulfilled desire, partly arising out of the very satisfaction religion achieves and partly out of the failure of religion to satisfy the aspirations of man so far. Jesus stands in definite relation to the residuary problems of other religions rather than with the satisfied longings of men in those faiths. It may be that non-Christian faiths find in the aspects of our Lord's life not yet explored by the Church a fulfilment of their unsatisfied longings. Here the doctrine of fulfilment has some bearing. We have already shown that Dr. Kraemer's own view turns out to be neither a solution nor a helpful pointer.

Our own view (already expressed) is that Jesus stands in relation to man as a new creation stands towards the old. He

is not perfect man, but a New Man. In Jesus we have the Creator's answer to creation's groaning for a new life. Jesus is therefore the segment that completes the circle. He is the 'new given' that has entered the world. As electric light stands to all light known before, as cosmic energy stands to all energies known to science, so does Jesus stand to man as we know him. Hinduism makes the perfect man; Christianity the new Man. Hinduism harnesses the *Mahasakti* of nature and man, Christianity brings into evolution the new *Sakti* of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the first fruits of a new creation. Hinduism the final fruits of the old creation.

#### WHAT SHALL WE DO AND HOW SHALL WE DO IT ?

In the last two chapters of the book the conclusions arrived at are applied to the immediate task of the missionary. He has to act in a changing world of moral and social values. Political and social revolutions are rapidly taking away the solid props on which he was wont to rely. The Church and Christian society in the West are in a turmoil. On the field, the prestige of the West as invaders or purveyors of a superior culture, has fast declined. Non-Christian faiths are taking a new life, vivified by the dynamic of nationalism. While Christian ideals may likely spread quickly in Eastern lands, conversions in the sense of annexations to the Church or society may be opposed not only by society but also by the State. Hinduism challenged by the crisis of the times manages to put forth unprecedented vigour in the moral sphere and the State by apt legislation is removing disabilities that acted as the best recruiting agent for Islam and Christianity. For one thing the missionary has to rely entirely on the spiritual resources of Christianity and not on the material resources of his own country nor on the adverse social conditions of the depressed. The urge to spread the Gospel is perennial in Christianity. If old methods and forces serve us no longer, new powers should be discovered, new weapons forged.

In the past, evangelism was conceived as a warfare. Christian and non-Christian faiths were ranged as enemies with their weapons, mostly disputation, turned against each other. The missionary and his sharpshooters ventured periodically into the enemy's territory, gave engagements and returned occasionally with captives of war. This was the at-



mosphere in which St. Paul not infrequently preached the Gospel. But this need not be the perpetual atmosphere of religions. Among religions, the spirit of bellicose hostility must cease. The Hindu should not feel that the moment he nods, the enemy will snatch away some of his fold. We must live as friends and love each other and in that atmosphere spread the Gospel.

#### AFFILIATION TO THE CHURCH

Two obstacles in the way are the Church and community. The latter a joint product of the social intolerance of the Hindu and the excessive zeal of the missionary, may gradually disappear in India. A separate Christian community, segregated from other communities, socially and politically, is a peculiar phenomenon in India. Religious toleration and growing nationalism will banish excommunication and with it the necessity to form a community. But what of the Church? We preach the Gospel but recruit for the Church. Can we stop the latter process and be satisfied with the former? Are we satisfied with conversion, a change of life without insisting on affiliation to the Church? Very often, the desire to bring the convert into the Church arises out of a fear that otherwise he may relapse. We say that a Panchama convert, if left to himself, may revert to his original faith. Membership in a Church serves as a sort of moral segregation. In other words, we are not sure that the conversion was deep enough and strong enough to withstand the joint influence of heredity and environment. In such a situation, why not conceive it our duty to produce a moral change which will be proof against these influences? Non-affiliation to the Church need not mean denial of self expression to the changed life. Life will express itself, for that is its nature. We feel we ought to control and guide the new life. Cannot we leave it to God? We do not, because we think we convert and therefore we are responsible for the future of the convert. If we realise that God is the agent in conversion, we may be inclined to leave the future in His hands. Whatever grounds there were for affiliation to the Church in the past, now that things are changing, the time has arrived for the missionary to preach and convert and leave it to the converts to organise the new life, as they are moved. Then we may look forward to Christianity as a movement in the Hindu social fold rather than a solid society outside.

The gains are manifold. The three-fold obstacle to evangelism will disappear. The missionary is regarded as a man-snatcher rather than as a soul winner. The craze for members has now acquired a political meaning. The objection for mass conversion of Panchamas or Sudras is that it disturbs the political weightage of communities. Where men mean votes, a new incentive to keep up the numerical strength of the communities comes into operation. Now that Christians are a community, the temptation to mount up the political and social ladder by increasing in numbers, presents itself strongly. Already an alarmed Hindu society has turned to radical social measures to stop the migration. The anti-untouchability movement and the temple entry zeal find explanation in the new earnestness to stop other communities acquiring numbers at the cost of Hindu society. The battle for numbers robs evangelism of its spiritual flavour. The contact of the Christian community and a missionary agent with Hindu life has been restricted to the single point of religious inroads. Nothing natural and spontaneous can flourish where the missionary propaganda is undertaken by professional and paid agents. This works both ways. It breeds in the Christian community the feeling that "evangelism" can be handed over to "agents" paid and trained for the purpose. The society as a whole loses the missionary fervour. The Hindu notes that the zeal to propagate Christianity is an official and professional one. He observes that it does not spring spontaneously out of love in every Christian heart. Christianity can never spread as a spiritual contagion so long as Christian propaganda is officialised. Even where the layman preaches he does so under a sense of duty as one on whom the burden is laid, not as one in whom the song springs from a joyous heart. The 'pose' of a preacher kills really the springs of genuine enthusiasm.

#### CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT WITHIN HINDUISM

Above all, segregation while it saves us from the worst, saves us also from the best in Hinduism. Isolation prevents heart contact. It is difficult for life to operate across communal barriers. A Christian movement within Hinduism without its umbilical cord being cut is a decided advantage to the Hindu and the Christian. As things stand, the Christian does not get the benefit of true Hindu revivals nor does the Hindu get a living touch with the spontaneous spiritual enthu-

siasm of the Christian. Experience shows that societies and communities tend to become self sufficient, lose spontaneous missionary zeal. The foreign missionary is getting more and more engrossed with the Church which has become the organ of society. Unless we can conceive and implement a method in which the Christian life is not tethered to the Church or community, the prospects of a missionary movement reaching into the depths of Hinduism are very poor. There are greater possibilities for the spread of the Gospel if it spreads as life, opinion and inner change than as social groups or spiritual groups outside Hinduism. The danger to religion in India has always been its precipitation first into a community and next into a caste. Buddhism and Jainism have died as victorious religions they were at one time and live as castes and communities. The same fate will overtake Christianity if we persist in the method of segregation.

#### INDIVIDUAL AND MASS CONVERSIONS

The progress of Christianity in India is conceived in terms of individual conversions or social landslides. Both these methods have their limitations and may be said to have reached the limits of their possibilities. The conversion of India by individuals requires eternity and cannot be achieved in time. Nevertheless, in moral value, intellectual stimulus, spiritual devotion, individual conversions outweigh mass conversions. What little we have of art, literature, philosophy, devotional advance can easily be traced to converts with traditions of culture. Mass conversions though they bring numbers, bring also other problems. As a rule, the communities are imperfectly permeated by the spirit of Christ. While material improvements, so long as funds from abroad are forthcoming, are noticeable, when compared with their previous wretched conditions, it may be doubted even if this advantage can be secured if a poor organisation like the National Missionary Society launches on mass conversions. This applies to Panchamas. Conversions among Kapus stand on a different footing. They are among the most conservative of our communities. Added to this, they possess the immobility of the agricultural classes. Their acceptance of Christianity in the Diocese of Dornakal is very hopeful sign, deserving careful study. Nevertheless it is a sad fact that ancient Christian communities, or second or third generations in mass movement areas, are not conspicuous for spiritual zeal or moral elevation. This shows that religion

cannot be inherited but must be in the long run personal and individual. Traditions, or inherited religions are the causes of social stability as well as of spiritual decay or stagnation.

Mass conversions cannot go on indefinitely. They produce immediate reactions in Hindu society by way of intensifying opposition to conversion or removing the elements of discontent. One obvious reaction to mass conversion is the agitation for the removal of untouchability and the ban on temple entry. The depressed classes have learned their economic value and can be trusted to use it as a lever of social improvement. The revolt of the Panchama has been avowedly secular and social. He wants to enter communities which assure social equality. He does not seem to desire Christianity in particular. This is emphasised by the fact that Catholic Panchama Christians also have raised the banner of revolt. It is perhaps too early to determine the effect of the freedom for Panchama to enter temples obtaining in Travancore on mass conversions. Hinduism seems to be wide awake. It has prophets who are pleading for the social rights of the Panchama. Once these are conceded, we may doubt whether the missionary can exploit the economic or social conditions and the movement may halt. The progress of Christianity must rest on its inherent appeal and not on adventitious external conditions. It must rest on Christian love and not on the discontent of the Hindu. Europe is now paying for her mass conversions in the past. The national religion always stands as against national inclination. Rome and Jesus have always received equal honours. Jesus has not weeded out of Europe her allegiance to Roman and Greek cultures. What we require and require urgently is a revolution in our conception of the spread of Christianity and how it is to be achieved. Till then, we have simply to muddle along.

#### CHANGE LIFE IMPULSES OF HINDUISM

Dr. Kraemer opportunely draws attention to the fact that Hinduism is a highly integrated socio-ethical structure forming an indivisible whole. When confronted with such an organisation, pickaxe methods have little or no value. The impossibility of reducing Hinduism atom by atom or block by block needs no demonstration. A great religion like Hinduism can only be changed when its mind and soul are changed or when its life impulses are altered. We should not conceive

Hinduism as a huge tabernacle peopled with millions of Hindus. It should be thought of as a cosmic personality capable of undergoing profound changes in the depth of its being. You cannot empty the house by enticing inmates one by one nor can you fill it with a new type of inhabitants by storming its door or forcing an entry. The radical evil of the present method is that we are hoping to get all the Hindus to declare for a set of theological propositions or enrol them as members of a Church or draw them into the circle of a community. The procedure requires a radical change. Then Christianity will produce the same effect on Hinduism as the moon has on the sea. It would create tidal waves of spirituality or reform within Hinduism. These emotional disturbances create radical changes of thought and outlook, gradually approximating to that of Jesus and his dream for the world. There will be no baptisms, no confessions of faith, no credal profession. The Hindu has to change before Hinduism can change. He will slowly and in different degrees come under the influence of the spirit of Christ, without change of labels, or nomenclature. There will be more and more men, Christian at heart and spirit though going by the name of Hindus. When we have Christians in name with little of the spirit of Christ, why should we not have Hindus in name but possessing the spirit of Christ in reality? Just as there are nominal Christians and virtual pagans, there will be virtual Christians and nominal pagans. The change will be in the realm of spirit—not in the region of *nama and rupa*. There will be less of conscious choice of Jesus and formal surrender to him, but more unconscious reproduction of the Christian life.

These are happening—only we have no eyes to see the change. We may quarrel whether Mahatmaji is a Christian or a Hindu. We may deny he is a Christian, the Hindu may deny he is a Hindu, the Christian may deny he is a Christian. It does not matter how you label him. He is a mixed product of the Gospel of Christ and the message of the Gita. Both Jesus and Sri Krishna may recognise in him a disciple. The process of Christianising Hinduism will take the shape of men who are influenced by the spirit of Christ partially at first, and in increasing degree later. Who are we to prescribe that every follower of Christ should be one-hundred per cent follower or none at all? You and I divide our homage between Christ and the State. So the future Indian may divide

his homage between Hinduism and Christianity. We had a system of political reform called dyarchy in which the departments are transferred to popular control one by one. At no time can it be predicted that we are free from foreign domination nor completely under popular control. It was a confusing mixture of opposites just as life happens to be. Hinduism will begin as a five per cent Christianity—adopting Christian ethics but not Jesus: then by degrees enlarge till the attaining of the full stature of our Lord. That is the way in which life moves, by slowly mounting up the ladder of life, not from species to species by leaps and bounds. We are dominated by statistics. We want Christians whom we can number and label as such. But you are going to get men of whom you cannot say where the Christian begins or the Hindu ends. This life process spreads like gas into every crevice of national life not depending on formal entry by door, after using the door bell.

#### HOW WESTERN CULTURE ADVANCES

We may have a better idea of this process if we compare the advance of Western culture in India. This furnishes certain startling contrasts. Western culture came to India much later than Christianity. It was more intimately associated with the foreign conqueror than Christianity which was at least an Asiatic religion. It came with the studied insolence of a superior to an inferior. It had no contact with our tradition and culture and outlook on life. In many respects the civilisations represent opposing and irreconcilable ideals. Nevertheless, there can hardly be any doubt that Western culture has advanced all along the line and has done more to change Hindu society and religion than Christianity. It may be supposed that the prestige of the British as a ruler accelerated the movement. No. In fact this actually retarded the process. Much of the odium attached to the conqueror spread to the culture. In Turkey, China, Persia... all self governing countries, the penetration of Westernisation was quicker and more telling than in India. We may safely predict that one of the immediate effects of complete autonomy of India would be the further spread of Westernism.

How does culture manage to overcome the difficulties which religion cannot surmount? We may answer the question easily. The attack of Christianity was direct,

provoking the combative instincts of Hinduism; that of Westernism was indirect. Christianity made war against Hinduism. There was no permanent contact between the contending parties. Culture made a peaceful penetration. While some boasted of Western culture and the inferiority of the East and retarded the movement, the culture insinuated itself into every crevice of natural structure and entered through every opening of public and domestic life. It attacked the environment and the mind simultaneously. The shops were full of foreign articles; the schools were full of foreign culture. In the playground, in public buildings, in railways, in theatres, in cinema halls—wherever you turned, you met it. It became our inescapable environment. The press and literature led the silent attack on the spirit. Here too, 'suggestion' was more powerful than 'direct preaching'. Science, the most powerful propagandist of Westernism—by sheer power of achievement has won unexpected victories over conservatism. Compared with the attack of culture, the attack of Christianity was deliberate, one pointed and without atmosphere. It did not try to permeate. It neglected Art and Literature. It was dedicated to Church and dogma, not to life and movement. Thus, it happened that while the Church counts its gain by grains, culture reaps the harvest and fills the granary.

### A TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

If Christianity is to permeate Hindu Society, the whole policy, aim and method have to be changed. In the new programme, speaking tentatively, the following lines of work may be developed:

1. The policy of individual or mass conversion with the avowed object of forming the converts into a community or a Church should be radically modified.

2. The idea that a person should be either a Hindu or a Christian should also be relinquished. This may work all right for statistical purposes, but is not according to the process of life, which does not operate by clear cut distinctions. In India we must be prepared to see the gradual infusion of Hinduism by Christian ideals and above all Christian life. We must force the pace of this process.

3. We may with profit learn a lesson—a valuable one, from the way in which Western culture has succeeded in making headway in the East. This way consists in creating an atmosphere rather than a solid nucleus, whether a community or a Church. To create a powerful Christian atmosphere within Hinduism appears to be the immediate task.

4. The successful working out of this line of approach first requires a mental change which permits us to look on life as energy and power and not as numbers. We must conceive the function whether of the Church or of community not in terms of expansion but in terms of movements created within Hinduism changing its outlook into that of Christ.

Before we formulate an evangelical programme for the Indian Christians, we must study the psychology of the Indian mind. We have to discover along what tracks, mental and moral energy spreads in Hindu society. In the East, personality exercises more influence than institution. You must have a seer or rishi before you can open the mind of a Hindu. In this connection there is room for research work. The three great evangelistic movements in Hinduism are (i) the spread of Aryanism in Dravidian South India; (ii) the spread of Buddhism from India outwards; (iii) the spread of Bhakti cults within India. A study of these missionary movements of Hinduism may throw some light on national psychology and yield valuable data for an approach to the problem.

5. Coming to the concrete programme, the central importance should be given to the Christian press and literature. Christians have no press and have no literature. We have not produced a single song, religious or secular, which spontaneously appeals to a Hindu by the beauty of words or tune. We have not produced a single novel describing the Christian way of life—of sufficient merit to insure of a Hindu reading public. We have yet to start a magazine or a daily of sufficient worth to command purchase by the man in the street. The arts are neglected as well. In painting, music, architecture, we have not as much as made an entry into national culture. The objective should not be to produce a separate branch of Christian art or culture but to use art as a vehicle of or incentive to the artistic exposition of Jesus and his message. We must throw ourselves into the literary and art renaissance for its own sake, carve a name and utilise the new form of



expression to commend the Gospel. I do not see why 'preaching' by word should be the sole instrument of propaganda. A Christian who composes a patriotic song which breathes the spirit of Christ and commends itself to the public at large, carries the message far more successfully than one who makes a devotional hymn. Michael Madhusudan Dutt moved in the right direction when he chose a subject from Ramayana for poetic treatment. He became the father of Bengali Renaissance. If Vedanayaka Sastriar and Krishna Pillai followed his example, we should have secured a footing in the emotional centre of national life, gaining an effective contact with the mind of the nation. Herein is the danger of the Church. The Christian restricts his natural field of self expression to the Church or community and reserves his formal and official modes of action to the Hindu. He should regard the whole nation as his proper field.

The line of attack indicated involves a vital departure in the plan of Christianisation. Hitherto, we have attacked Hinduism in a haphazard manner, pressing where the opposition is weak and always having an eye on numbers without concern for quality. The zeal for numbers has led us much astray. Hinduism for evangelistic purposes was always treated merely as a crowd where one member was as good as another. In fact, Hinduism is a structure carefully built. It has key centres, nervous system, critical points as well as mass. To illustrate our point, take the village. It does not consist merely of a number of villagers. It has a constitution. It has the potter, the priest, the merchant, the land owner, the pandits, the watchmen. It has a dozen men who control the village life. You capture this dozen, you gain control of the village in the real sense of the term. If the village carpenters and potters are Christian, the village industries become Christian. Through these we gain the key to the mind of the village. If the village priest becomes Christian, we Christianise the religion of the place. Under the present plan, these twelve count for twelve only. To the village catechist, any twelve souls are good enough. Next, when we convert these, they are detached from their social context and become members of the Church. They lose their influence on the village life. We gain a congregation and lose the village, if we endeavour to change their mind and heart instead of capturing them for the Church, we should have brought the whole village nearer to Christ. The same criticism applies to

national organisations. Instead of influencing the nation, we are concentrating on forming groups which soon devote themselves to their internal life and become a community or a Church. We cannot develop any thing like a detailed plan here but what we have stated may be sufficient to indicate a new approach to the whole problem.

The East may be nominally converted as the West. We may even Christianise the East in a way. Yet the crucial problem remains, namely, the creation of new life—the demonstration that the life of Jesus with all its love and power can be reproduced. In the heart of Hinduism there remains an unrealised longing for a life here which transcends karma. The Gita points out that we can live in this world without submitting ourself to karma. Jesus demonstrates a life lived on earth which triumphs over karma or sin. Are these mere longings, and ambitions not to be realised? Then we have no message for Hinduism. We both cherish unrealisable ambitions.

Right in the heart of Hinduism, there has always been a conception of religion which means a widening, deepening or enlarging of human personality—a problem different from education—the working out of potentialities. All this spiritual effort, intensely personal, went by the names of Yoga. The Buddhist, Hindu Vedist, and Bhakta all agreed on this point. It represented a discipline above the ethical. It concerned personality and the roots of our being. Till the Christian discovers or discloses the Christian Yoga of rebirth, we skirmish on the outskirts. Here is the fundamental weakness of the Church. Rebirth has become a doctrine, else toned down into repentance for the simple reason that the Holy Spirit has become a doctrine or sanctified reason. Unless we conceive of this new birth as a biological process, a process which like life covers the physical, mental, and moral, we miss its significance. India awaits the fruition of this experiment. It is on the tiptoe of expectation. Already some of the mature souls of modern India have caught the fascination of the great experiment. It is all a question who discovers first. He will be the great evangelist. Church and Baptism, names, are all labels. We need to possess reality, India always searched for reality and yielded to reality. The future of Christianity lies in the spiritual laboratory. The Indian Christian must concern himself with 'rebirth'. God gave Jesus. True evangelism consists in reproducing Jesus. The process is

Christianity. When we have discovered it, the Hindu will besiege you, instead of your begging for his attention. Let the foreign missionary preach and teach. Let the professional organs of the Church plan campaigns, join battles. The Indian Christian who can see deeper should take to the prayer room and experiment on *rebirth*,—harness the Holy Spirit to the creation of new life.

Dr. Kraemer's is a great book. It challenges the spirit. It calls for deep cogitation and prayerful reconsideration of eternal verities. The confusion of the times demands a penetrative analysis of the situation. We have disclosed the mind of the Indian on those great issues. India needs Jesus—in the deepest sense of reproducing him. Hence our agonising search. How shall we do it? This experimentation will be the special task of our Ashrams. If the World Conference answers the question, we shall be their debtors and the Conference will mark a new era.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ASHRAMS

BY S. JESUDASEN

No institution of ancient India is so characteristic of its genius and practical sagacity as the *ashram*. Like human beings, it was generated by life and in turn became the progenitor of life. Rishis gave us ashrams and the ashrams gave us rishis in return. Many great institutions and customs of the past have failed us. They outlived their purpose and usefulness. Once ministers of life, they turned out to be enemies of progress. Caste was once useful as an instrument of social organisation. None deem it indispensable now. Not a few of the wise feel it an inkstone fetter on the race. But ashrams have always served us and today they are as much a necessity as when they came into existence ages ago.

Ashrams have unlimited potentialities and their adaptability has been always marvellous. Like the photo cell, their applications are innumerable. In every field of life, religious, social and political, ashrams have demonstrated their utility and suitability to Indian conditions.

Ashrams have always been instruments of whole life, not sections. As in ancient times, so in our days we put into practice our ideal of life in all its aspects in an ashram. Religion is not a department of life, but life itself. So also life in ashrams. Political, medical and social ashrams are misnomers. In an ashram, we live full life, whole life or nothing at all.

Again it is a false notion that ashrams were entirely spiritual and that rishis were entirely religious. The great Kings of the past were sent to ashrams to be trained in all the kingly duties. They learnt archery, love of common people, democratic principles, king-craft and diplomacy.

The Indian Church can come to its own only when ashrams rise and flourish. We need more than all spiritual

experimentation—by a group, knit by love. We need scientific research by a band of selfless men. We have to discover the meaning and value of the creative energy called the Holy Spirit. We need new discoveries, if disease is to be banished and the earth to be made, not the grave of the masses, but their source of livelihood—opulent livelihood. Colleges and churches cannot produce the men we need. Councils and legislators cannot make us better men. We need ashrams.

The Church and the nation alike need union and unity. We realise the desperate need. We lack the fire that fuses us all into one. In the ashrama we transcend customs, petty creeds, communities and communalism.

## I

### ANCIENT HINDU ASHRAMS

The main object of ancient Hindu ashrams was not mere teaching or preaching but living. Disciples were admitted into the ashram, not primarily for the receiving of instruction, but to be trained in "Sadhana", the realization of an ideal. These ashrams were, if one might so express them, "laboratories for religious experiment."

Ashrams are as old as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The most ancient ashrams are described in the *Ramayana*. Those described therein were "spiritual power-houses", spread as chains throughout Dandhakaranya. These maintained the Vedic worship through fire and taught their students the knowledge and practice of 'Yagnya.' The training of Sri Rama in his youth was entrusted to the great Rishi Visvamitra who dwelt in one such ashram. These rishis were Kshatryas and taught the students the use of bows and arrows. The story of Rama bending the famous Janaka's bow of war and winning for himself his fair daughter Sita is familiar to all. 'Dharma' was different to the Brahman and the Kshatrya. While Ahimsa or non-killing was the dharma for the Brahman, the dharma of the Kshatrya was to fight "God's battles". As we shall see later, when Buddhism, and later Jainism, rose to be the dominant religions, Ahimsa became a dharma for all, the Brahman and the Non-Brahman.

These Vedic ashrams exercised their missionary influence of spreading spiritual culture, not through disciples sent out

on the errand but by rishis living in ashrams, with their spirit permeating silently but surely in a heaven-like manner. The ashrams carried out experiments in religious ideas and the rishis carried on also an extensive research in medical science through the study of herbs, roots, etc., which they found growing everywhere around their forest dwellings. This is how 'Siddha' medical science developed.

During the Upanishad period there were various schools of thought about "Brahman" and there were various methods and practice of realising Brahman. "Who is Brahman and could we know Him?" was the subject of enquiry. Each ashram represented a separate school of thought and type of 'Sadhana.'

Later the practice of Yoga became the centre of religious thought and idealism, and the ashrams became centres of Yogic culture and training. The result of Yoga is *Shanthi*. i.e., Peace. The soul, having found God, and being united with him, is at peace with God and with all creation. It has established harmony with the universe.

As the inmates of these ashrams dwelt in forests and depended for their physical sustenance upon what grew around them they also began to study the herbs and their healing properties. This developed a certain kind of research in medical science and they developed systems of therapy, for example, the Siddha systems of medicine. To this extent the ancient ashrams served as centres of scientific research.

The fundamental and main features of an ashram might be stated roughly as follows :

1. The continual presence of a rishi or a man of God revered by all for his life of holiness and purity.
2. The object of all the ashrams was "Sadhana", the realisation of an ideal. Not mere teaching or preaching or the mere imparting of a knowledge of religious truths in an intellectual fashion, but Living and Realising were the prime objects. They—the rishi and the disciples—had come together more to live a life of trying to realise an ideal rather than merely for the purpose of study.

3. The ashrams had no connection with any ecclesiastical or religious organisation, "orders," or institutions, such as the temples, or ancient seats of learning or universities, neither were they formally opposed to these institutions. They helped to purify popular religion.

4. Ancient ashrams were not primarily intended for social service, although social work to the extent demanded for self-expression was practised. On the other hand, Buddhist monasteries emphasised the need for such social service as teaching, healing the sick, etc., as an integral part of religious practice.

5. These ashrams should not be confused with the four ashrams or stages of a man's life as Brahmacharya, Grahasta, Vanaprastha, and Sanyasa.

6. Ashrams were situated in forests, near a river, in the midst of very peaceful natural scenery. Their life of simplicity amidst these beautiful natural surroundings, inspired them to the worship of God, especially observing those times when nature shows herself at her best—the twilight period before sunrise and after sunset—Sandhya. Sandhya (meeting) was the meeting of the night and day and of the day and night—just after the last star has gone out of sight and the sun has not yet risen; and again just after the sun has gone down and the first star has not appeared in the skies. Buddhist "Viharas" (monasteries) were situated in groves (topes).

7. All the disciples of the rishi in the ashram were practising Brahmacharyam—celibacy—during the period of their training and residence at the ashram.

The rishi was a man who had attained outer and inner Shanthi (peace) through the reconciliation of the conflicting aspects of life. The rishi loved both man and beast, humanity and nature alike. He differed from an ascetic in that he was willing to enjoy ordinary life to the extent it promoted this inward and outward Shanthi, his renunciation being limited only to the extent the fulfilment of his ideal demanded. The rishi and the disciples lived together as one family. He helped them to realise the presence of God. He was not God, but they saw God through him. The rishi was there going in and out amongst them and he was always available as a

guide and counsellor in all their spiritual perplexities or difficulties. All together were possessed by the one overmastering passion to get into an intimate relationship with God, the realisation of His presence.

## II

### MODERN HINDU ASHRAMS: THEIR NATURE, PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Modern Hindu ashrams have developed the old ashram ideals still further, and, while still following some of the outstanding features of the old ashrams, have gone further in adapting these to modern needs and conditions of life, changing and broadening their objectives to include social service. Hence, unlike the old ashrams, they are often near a town. Shantiniketan ashram near Bolpur, has not only a high school on ashram lines recognised by the Calcutta University but also a hospital with a qualified doctor for treating the poor and an agricultural farm for demonstration of modern agricultural developments to the villagers, under the able management of a well-qualified Indian gentleman trained in America. Satyagraha Ashram, had a large number of workers in the spinning and weaving department, as well as an agricultural and a large dairy farm, tannery, etc., all for the purpose of doing something to relieve unemployment, poverty and distress. It had also the Vidyapath for the training of young men for national service, besides the Khadi Technical School.

All modern Hindu Ashrams, like the ancient ones, have some outstanding features. First of all there is a *central personality*, the founder and inspirer of the whole institution, the object of reverential love and devotion and filial love for all the inmates of the ashram, the one who corresponds to the Maha Rishi of ancient ashrams. Shantineketan has Dr. Rabin-dranath Tagore, Satyagraha Ashram had Mahatma Gandhi, and Ramana Ashram has Ramana Maharishi.

The ashrama founded near Thiruvannamalai by Ramana Maharishi is perhaps the nearest approach to the ancient ashrams of the Yogi period. Meditation and silence form the main feature of this Ashram. Ramana Maha Rishi is usually a very silent man. When I visited this ashram, I was fortunate enough to engage him in conversation. "What is prayer?



Does it mean to you the continuous practice of the presence of God?" I asked him. Straight came the reply, "The presence of God! Why, how can I escape from that presence? He is there wherever I turn." "What is an Ashram" I asked him. "It is the abode of those who have conquered the 'ego' and gained complete control of the mind", he replied. I asked "What is Brahmachariam?" "It is complete mastery over the mind," he replied.

There are certain other features characteristic of modern Hindu Ashrams, besides the presence of the rishi, which I must mention here. These are rather the means than the end to reach the ultimate goal or the ideal of the ashrams. These features have naturally come into being as a development in the working out of the central ideal.

One of these is the observance of *Brahmachariyam* or celibacy. At Shantiniketan only a certain definitely marked-out area is called ashram proper. Only unmarried people and the school boys live here. Within this area, no meat should be brought. A notification on stone stands to this effect near where this area begins. Only beyond this area, married people live. At Satyagraha Ashram also the main road divided the ashram into two parts. The part bordering the river was occupied only by those who had taken the vow of Brahmacharyam, whether they be married or unmarried. Those who had not taken this vow had to live on the other side of the road. The Ramana Ashram near Thiruvannamalai expects all its inmates to be Brahmacharyas. The founder Ramana Maha Rishi himself has been an unmarried man all his life. In the old ashram too all the disciples had to observe Brahmacharyam. In modern Hindu Ashrams with the modern pressing need for the self-sacrificing service to uplift the poor and down-trodden, the need for self-mastery and Brahmacharyam has become a matter of urgency for those who have felt the definite call for pouring out their lives in the service of their fellow-men.

Another feature of modern Hindu ashrams is the development of the Gurukula (Guru's family) ideal in education. The relationship between the teacher and the pupil should be that of a father and child. As a matter of fact, the Gurukula expects the ordinary parents to transfer to the Gurukula complete control of the spiritual up-bringing and education of the

child. At the Gurukula at Hardwar, the terms of admission are that a boy enters the Gurukul when 6 years of age and does not leave it until he is 25, covering the most formative and impressionable period of their lives. The teachers do everything for them, looking after the temporal and spiritual welfare of the boys, with care and affection like parents. At Shantiniketan the relation between the pupils and the teachers is most informal, free and easy. The boys stretch themselves under the trees when the classes are held in the open air. The ashram ideal in education is the development of personality and not mere imparting of instruction in facts—certainly not the mere passing of examinations. At Vidyapith, the aim was to have an education that would be related to the life of the masses and to train men to be servants of the people.

No caste distinction is allowed here.

### III

#### CHRISTIAN ASHRAMS—HOW THEY HAVE BEEN ADOPTING THE ASHRAM IDEALS

In seeking to discover why this ashram ideal is captivating so many Christians in India to-day, one has to go back a little into the history of Christianity in India, and more especially into that of the missions from the West.

The first missionaries (especially the Roman Catholic missionaries) were men who saw nothing but evil in Hinduism and looked upon Hindus as people who were debased and corrupt. Thus wrote Francis Xavier, one of the saintliest of the R. C. missionaries, to his chief Loyola in one of his letters: "The whole race of Hindus is barbarous and will listen to nothing that does not suit its barbarous customs. Regarding the knowledge of what is God-like and virtuous it cares but little."

Since his time, there have been others, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, who have in a measure shared with Francis Xavier the same attitude towards the religion and people of this land.

A change in attitude came about 1606, when Robert de Nobili and other Jesuits of a high intellectual order, ability, culture and sacrifice, Indianised themselves and their methods

of Christian work until later they incurred papal condemnation. They went about dressed in the orange garb of Hindu Sanyasis wearing wooden sandals and carrying the "Yoga-thanda" (the meditation staff of Hindu ascetics) and even wearing the sacred thread like Brahmins. The famous Father de Nobili was one of them. His successor, Father Beschi who is better known among Indian Roman Catholics by his Indian name "Veeramahamuni" adopted even more radical methods. Beschi was thorough in his study of Tamil, and became a great scholar in the language. It is even said he used to shut himself for study from early morning until forenoon in a little village hut where he lived for the sake of language study. He composed a book called *Thembhavani* a Tamil poetical work considered by Tamil scholars as a masterpiece of Tamil literature. That this attempt at identification with people was a success is proved at least to me by the history of my own family. My ancestor's conversion to Christianity from Hinduism was brought about by one of these early Jesuits in 1690 A.D. Protestant Missions did to some extent also err in this hostile attitude towards things Hindu. Harmless Indian habits and even Indian music were long called "heathen". A change came later when men like, Dr. William Miller of the Madras Christian College and Dr. J. N. Farquhar began to take the attitude that Christianity was the crown of Hinduism. As a set off to this, others said that Christian missions should neither condemn nor adopt things Hindu, but should be satisfied with the mere preaching of Christ and Cross.

The history of Christian Ashrams began at a more recent period, when some Christians, both missionaries and Indians in India, began to see a great obstacle to the understanding of the message of Christ in the firm opinion of the people of India that Christianity was a foreign religion. This opinion has been complicated by the fact of the political domination of the "Christian" nations of the West over the East. These two factors, partly racial and partly political, have created problems which set some Christian men and women in India thinking and have moved them to certain visions which have resulted in the founding of Christian ashrams. Now, this is only the beginning. It is wrong to suppose they have just stayed where they began. The ashram movement is not a mere change of missionary tactics as some seem to assume. It is not, as a critic once assumed, a mere

change of front in the missionary battle—having failed at the frontal attack, trying the flank or the rear! It is not a mere *camouflaged* proselytising affair, as the earlier Jesuit attempts have been (I think uncharitably) described by some. If so, it should have failed by now or at least its ultimate failure is certain. The members of Christian Ashrams have adopted a mode of life and service because it is only right and proper to do so.

Of course this ideal has to be modified and adapted to fit in with that conception of the Kingdom of God which the Lord Jesus Christ taught and worked and died for. For that Kingdom, men and women of all sorts and types are wanted. But He did define His terms very clearly.

1. *Renunciation*. To some these terms have meant selling all that they had, distributing their goods among the poor, taking up the cross and following Him who had nowhere to lay His head. This renunciation also includes something more difficult than the mere giving up of wife, home and property, namely the renunciation of Self—the most difficult thing to do.

“ Yet, one chain is left unbroken.  
Lord, from self I am not free.”

The problem of wealth and poverty does raise many questions in the mind of many earnest disciples of Jesus Christ. It was in our mind before Christu-Kula Ashram at Tirupattur was founded.

Ashrams are a great necessity in this land of poverty and for work among villagers.

2. *Brahmacharyam*. To some, Christ's call comes to lead the unmarried life for the sake of the Kingdom. St. Matthew xxi : 12. The economic conditions of Christians in India are so low that the present expensive machinery of church government is likely to breakdown ultimately.

In this connection, I cannot refrain from referring to Sadhu Sunder Singh whose name to-day is well-known in Christian circles in the East and West. He inspired Indian Christians to a new ideal of service and sacrifice on lines indigenous to India. His *sanyasi* life gave a great impetus

to the Ashram movement. As a result of this awakening, numerous wandering Sadhus are to be found in the community as well as groups living in what we may describe as Ashrams. Here mention is made of a few. They are of different types and are not likely to be standardised. They are numerous enough already to require a special survey which has not been undertaken yet.

1. *Christukula Ashram*: was founded in 1921 in Tirupattur, North Arcot District (South India) by Dr. S. Jesudasan, L. R. C. S., and Dr. E. Forrester Paton, M. B., Ch. B. The Ashram seeks to serve rural population through medical relief, and village uplift work. A place of worship modelled after the South Indian Temple, is a prominent feature of the Ashram.

2. *The Christa Seva Sangh* was started in 1922 in Poona by Father J. C. Winslow. It emphasises the meditative aspect of the religious life. It is Anglican in worship and in its membership. In 1924 the Sanga divided into two Ashrams, one called the Christa Prema Seva Sangh, being the original Ashram and the other engaged chiefly in rural work, a few miles away from Poona.

3. *The Bethany Ashram* was started about 20 years ago in Travancore by Father Gee Verghese who some years ago left it and joined the Roman Catholic Church.

4. *The Christa Sishya Ashram* at Thadagam, near Coimbatore, was started by Bishop Pakenham Walsh in connection with the ancient Syrian Church. Its main work is rural work by identification with the actual needs and life of the people.

5. *Gethsemane Ashram* was started in 1930 in Muvathupuzha in North Travancore.

In different ways in these Ashrams new types of Christian life and work are being developed.

## *Section V*

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### CHAPTER IX **CHURCH UNION: A STUDY OF UNDERLYING IDEAS**

BY  
**P. CHENCHIAH**

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### CHAPTER X **S. I. CHURCH UNION MOVEMENT**

BY  
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### CHAPTER XI **SOUTH INDIA RAPPROCHEMENT**

BY  
**V. CHAKKARAI**



## CHAPTER IX

### CHURCH UNION

#### A STUDY OF UNDERLYING IDEAS

BY P. CHENCHIAH

The experiment at Church Union involving negotiations between the South Indian United, Wesleyan, and Anglican Churches has attracted wide attention both in India and abroad. Living in a world torn by national and international dissensions we need not wonder that a longing for union has sprung in the hearts of Christian men and women. The Church has always felt secretly ashamed, though she was moved openly to champion denominations, of the existence of sectarian differences in her midst. She feels guilty in her better moments of having rent the seamless robe of the Lord, an act which even the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus refrained from. Periodic attempts at union receive from Churchmen support born out of a guilty conscience. The Anglo-Catholics have been dreaming of a reunion with Rome in due time and have been responsible for schemes of union at least among episcopal churches in the West who cherish the claim of apostolic succession, contemptuously denied to them by the Catholic Church. A wide scale attempt at union in India has received their attention and the Lambeth Conference has bestowed cautiously worded benedictions on the scheme. Another factor has added to the general interest. The champions of foreign missions have been looking in vain to discover a phenomenon in the mission field which justifies their high hopes of the moral value of the foreign field to the home Church. Not unnaturally they have acclaimed the scheme as the 'spiritual return' of the missions to the mother-churches. Here at least we have an experiment, not to be thought of by narrow-bound denominations of the West—an experiment which bears testimony to the broadening of vision which missionary work brings with it. The missionary on furlough can vary his stereotyped answer—saving the pagans—to the question: what are our missionaries doing with 'saving the Church'? While views might differ as to the prospects of success of the attempt we may recognise with gratification that in no other part of



the world were negotiations carried on for a decade and a half with such conspicuous equanimity of temper, sincerity of purpose, and spirit of accommodation. The mellowing and softening influence of the mission field, made itself felt at every stage. In India, the problem of 'Union' was kept right in the centre of consciousness of the Christian people. Though we may set against the scheme the fact that Indian Christians, so far happily ignorant of the Church, its divisions and their history, became mildly infected with what the wise may regard as quite useless learning, the union has caught on. Whether the particular experiment succeeds or not, the Indian Church has taken cognizance of the issue and the cause of union is assured as well as insured.

A critical stage in the negotiation was doubtless reached with the latest resolution of the Assembly of the S. I. U. C. Church (referred to as the Mandate in this article) that before making any further commitments, inter-communion and interchange of pulpits should be practised by the negotiating churches. Some regard the resolution as a sabotage of the union scheme—others call it a definite 'hitch' in the progress. We think this characterisation of the resolution arises out of a failure to grasp its inwardness. If its true significance is realised, we have occasion to ring bells rather wring hands. Naturally, an attempt will be made by those who are responsible for the scheme to cultivate world opinion in its favour through the World Conference. The writer belongs to the group which was directly or indirectly responsible for the 'resolution'. He thinks that the mandate opens a new vista of possibilities and holds the promise of a union far more enduring and useful than the 'scheme'. To form a correct opinion of the course of events, the mandate has to be studied in its true perspective. Then only one can realise how it marks the turning point in the history of Church Union.

#### A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF MISSIONS

It is singularly unfortunate that the efforts at union should have taken the shape of negotiations between three Churches—S.I.U.C., the Wesleyan, and the Anglican only. This invested the transaction with the colour of a bargain. It looked now and then that one party or other put up its prices in the knowledge that the other party may beat them down.

After protracted bargaining for a decade and a half, a feeling of boredom has descended on the negotiators and they are now anxious to conclude it speedily.

We may get wise after the event. Nevertheless, we now perceive that the 'attempt' could have started under better auspices. In order to explain why the whole subject of union has taken a new turn now, we have to study the situation as it developed in the course of the negotiations.

The origin and growth of Protestant Missions in India has a certain resemblance to the history of the East India Company. The territories within the forts established by the Company were treated as part of England. For example, the island of Bombay was held to be within the jurisdiction of Westminster. On the original side of the High Courts of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta—English law and procedure still prevails, as these places were once regarded as territories ceded to England and therefore part of it.

A similar view prevailed with regard to mission stations. The missionary was a member of the home-church sent abroad to do its work. The early converts who settled in the mission compound were overseas members of the denomination. They were ruled by home boards, financed from the church funds. The converts got their religion straight from the headquarters.

It was in this soil that the seeds of union first sprouted. The originators easily perceived that in these circumstances, any scheme of church union can be carried on only by the home churches. The missionaries themselves could not move without the sanction of their masters. Union negotiations in the home-lands were not practical politics. A start could not be made without bringing into existence an independent Indian Church which can shoulder responsibility for initiating steps towards union. Disaffiliation was therefore the necessary first step. A formal declaration of the independence of the Indian congregations connected with the denominational churches had to be made. To give body to the idea, the places of worship at least had to be transferred to them. The next step was a sort of disestablishment or separation of the missions from the Church. Till then the Church was an

annexe to the mission and the pastor an attachee to the missionary. The missionary occupied a dual role. He was a member of the home Church. He was the master of the Indian Church. With the separation of the mission from the Church, the missionary remained with the mission. This policy served a diplomatic purpose. The home Churches were willing that union should be attempted, but were unwilling to associate themselves with it. The missionary wanted to take a leading part in the union scheme but did not want to commit his masters by his action. The Indian Church cut the Gordian knot. The scheme may be blessed without incurring any responsibility for it, even without sanctioning and approving it. The missionary may negotiate as the agent of the Indian Church and not as the agent of the home Church. The Indian Church can only act if it has a constitution. Electorates were established, councils and assemblies set up. Autonomy of the Indian Church took shape. This autonomy could have any meaning only if the Indian Church acted for itself and paid for its own services. Devolution and self support came to the front. Self support was at first an euphemistic expression where the congregation consisted mostly of mission servants. It only meant that the church administrations was paid by the mission servants instead of by missions. As the mission servants got money from abroad, self-support was rather nominal than real. Thus, a mission policy of which disaffiliation, disestablishment, devolution, self-support are the main features—slowly emerged. What we have stated, accounts for the strange fact that the Indian Church had nothing Indian about it. It was an *amputated* limb of the denominational foreign Church. It had a separate body that it could call its own, but no mind or soul of its own. This did not matter. They were promptly borrowed from home boards. The independent Indian Church would have been a good joke were it not a sad reality. The Indian Church was the old over-sea branch of the home Church with a new name. It was not Indian before disaffiliation and it was not Indian after. Not all the denominations were willing to adopt the policy outlined above. The few who did, gave rise to the S. I. U. C. the nucleus of the so-called Indian Church. In the course of negotiation, the Church of England felt that they should also follow the example. The Indian section of the Church of England was called the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. Thus, there were, at first, two Indian bodies detached from

their connections abroad who could enter into negotiations with each other, without by their acts committing their respective parent churches, to any responsibility for the union scheme they may bring about. If the Church polity we are discussing spread all over missions, independent of union schemes or before the idea of union came to be entertained, we should have had in India a number of denominations untied from their foreign connection. If the idea of union dawned on them, then it would have taken not the form of negotiations, but of a search for a type of union suitable to their need. They would have examined various schemes of union with a view to select one which meets their needs.

But this was not to be for various reasons. The admirers of the scheme have failed to make one just claim for themselves. The negotiations have indirectly contributed for the clarification of the Church polity—a contribution of no inconsiderable value. Before the union scheme took shape, the various elements of church polity described above, existed as somewhat revolutionary ideas among the younger and bolder of the missionaries. The ancient shook their head at the suggestions of an Indian Church in doubt and not infrequently in disapproval. The ideas were implemented for the first time in the S. I. U. C. and further gained currency and assent as negotiations were developed. Church Union and the Indian Church were interrelated and developed together. Ideas and trends that now constitute a definite polity did not disentangle themselves from the matrix in which the missionary, the home Church and the Indian congregation were all of one piece—neither separate nor separable. Even now it may not be too late to set a commission to investigate all the available schemes of union and to report on the one suitable to Indian conditions. Having carried on the negotiations for over 15 years on a certain basis, it may not be possible for the Union Committee to convert itself into a commission of investigation or radically change the terms of their reference though, as we shall show, the 'mandate' may demand it. In my view both sides have suffered by the present procedure. Attention was fixed on claims rather than on merits. Whatever practical difficulties may exist for adopting any proposed scheme there can be none to our examination of the available schemes of union as candidates for acceptance, urging their merits.

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PATTERN

Critics of the Union scheme have not sufficiently realised that the Church of England was itself an union scheme which has stood the test of time. In one sense it is a bolder scheme than those proposed as alternatives. While other schemes try to unite only those churches which have in some measure a similarity in outlook, spiritual temper, the Church of England seeks to hold together sections which are diametrically opposed to each other in spirit and outlook. Opposites need not fly away from each. One way of toning down opposition and even reconciling opponents is to arrange for their living together. The idea that whenever an incompatibility of temper manifests itself, divorce should be sought and given fills the courts with matrimonial causes. There would have been fewer divorces if the quarrelling couples lived in the same house in spite of differences. We also place to the credit of the Church of England that it does not do away with differences and diversities, but tolerates them in sharp antithesis, embracing the authoritarian and evangelical sections in one Church. While holding to the episcopal form of Government, she has provided for democratic principles of election as well. A third claim deserves attention—the Anglican Church keeps the door open for a possible union with the Roman Church. Rome has not shown any inclination to receive the advances of the Anglo-Catholics. The Low Church seems to be innocent of any longing to be drawn into the bosom of the holy mother. But who knows what might happen in future? The Roman Church in her adversity may still seek new bedfellows. It is something to have doors open, though we bang them occasionally.

While recognising these claims, we cannot overlook the fact that the Anglican Church was the product of Anglo-Saxon genius—which happily or unhappily is not the common possession of other races. The capacity to muddle through to a success, to be illogical to some good purpose, is a special gift of God to their race. I have not studied the question, whether the Church flourishes outside England. I am aware that in the East it exists in various countries. How far it could colonise successfully in other lands or how far it could be adopted by other races—I do not know. Races with a logical mind like the Indian or the German may not have the

gift to run this institution. We may also doubt how far an union depending on the framework of government can stand the ravages and revolutions of the times. In India, caste which the Hindu thought with good reason was impregnable, is crumbling. Monarchical governments of undoubted antiquity have melted like butter before fire. Would it be useful to stake the union on the virtues of a cement? In these unsettling times, unity of mind and spirit endures better than structural unity. The Church of England owes its stability to its connection with the State. The State holds it tight. This source of strength may not be available in India. As it is, Anglicans have to rely a good deal on mental reservations—about creeds and sacraments. These may appeal to the sophisticated churchmen but not to the simple heathen who has not learned the civilised ways of using speech to hide his thoughts. If we accept the Church of England as a suitable model for union, two criticisms now urged against the scheme lose their point. We cannot say that the Church of England is having everything in its way. A model that does not have its own way may be worse than useless. Nor can we object to the episcopal form of government. Episcopacy is the bond of union in the Anglican Church. If you scrape it, you destroy the model you choose. The objection that the Indian Church becomes an enlarged edition of the Church of England under the Union scheme has meaning only if you reject it as a pattern, not when you accept it.

#### THE TWO-SPHERES UNION SCHEME

This scheme rejects the notion that a scheme of union should endeavour to hold irreconcilables together. Union—enduring union—can exist only among similarly minded—minds that belong to the same genus, which move in the same plane. Catholic and Protestant churches represent two irreconcilable outlooks on life. In India, instead of taking the Church of England as a pattern, we should resolve it into its component parts. One section of the Anglican Church should join the Protestants and the other, the High Anglican, should join the Roman Church. These two bodies should revolve on their own axes. If they leave their orbits and approach each other, only disastrous collisions will ensue. Nor should we make the forms of government the bond of union. The forms of government change and in these days quite rapidly. Variety of administrative forms—changing and changeable—should exist as secondary

features and not as the foundation of union. In India the Church of England should cease to be. Of course, we have to reduce the innumerable sects among Protestants. We may in theory reduce the Churches into two spheres, the Catholic and the Evangelical. Such a reduction constitutes a tremendous gain. When the union of Protestant sects is effected, it may be possible to enter into cooperative effects with the Church of Rome on certain matters. The sects in Protestantism have grown haphazardly—each sect emphasising one element more than the other. The time has come to resurvey the Protestant movement as a whole. Such a survey will reveal innumerable sects without any moral justification for separate existence. We may now discover that we can combine the various denominational emphasises and preserve them in one common Church—the reason for separation no longer existing. It may be possible to frame a simple creed for evangelicals which preserves the variety and richness of all denominations without the necessity for separate existence. We may admire the nose and the eye and even lay emphasis on the one or the other without plucking it out of the face. If we have done so once, we may now gather the emphasised features and restore them to the original face.

#### THE FEDERATION SCHEME

The Federal scheme eschews organic union and contemplates the continuance of diverse types of government and differences of doctrines and worship. It seeks the basis of union in the corridor of common effort in cooperative schemes. The autonomy of the component units, reduced in numbers, forms its main feature. Of late there has been an increase in efforts where several denominations contribute men and money. The Bangalore Theological College and the Madras Christian College are instances. The Federal idea requires to be worked out. At present, it comes in a *via media* between organic union and separate unit existence. When we develop the idea, we have to look for guidance to the governments who are familiar with the nation. In India, the Government of India Act sets up a federal structure and the Congress may evolve a scheme of its own. The two main points in the scheme are the type of federal constitution and the classification of federal subjects. Almost every subject has a local and a federal aspect. Education, medicine, theological study,

Christian literature occur at once as federal subjects. At present worship and doctrine will be entirely autonomous—not subject to federal control. Even here schemes of evangelism, selfsupport, devolution may be handed over to the federal organ, which will be composed of representatives of the units. We may be able to distinguish the primary and the secondary aspects in faith and worship also as we progress. While the union scheme starts with faith and order, the federal scheme begins with what we may call the secular subjects as the immediate field of union and moves slowly towards the faith and worship. Essentials have to be preserved, but it does not follow from this that non-essentials have to be destroyed. In contrast to the two sphere scheme, organic union is not thought of even among Protestant Churches. Both schemes reduce Protestant denominations considerably. There are innumerable sects which do not rest on any doctrinal difference or emphasis. They must go. So also many sects which depend on some minor point of doctrine or worship, for their separation. The federation scheme preserves autonomy, safeguards essentials, protects non-essentials.

## II THE MANDATE

We have described at length the various schemes as they were chronologically earlier than the mandate and afford the true context in which it should be studied.

### CAUSES FOR THE MANDATE

It was unfortunate that the union scheme started as negotiations. Equally unfortunate that it began with experts and committees. The projects started—as many do in India, of necessity—with a few who felt the need of union. The National Congress began in this way. But the Congress has realised the necessity for mass contact and to-day works furiously for it. The Union scheme, wherever it begins must end with the congregations. To endure, any union must spring from the hearts of the people or at least must be adopted by them with enthusiasm. Experts are not beloved of the people. Expert committees do not evoke popular enthusiasm. Negotiations were between the representatives of the churches. They spoke of mystifying doctrines or musty historical antecedents. They were in search for an acceptable formula. They were producing rules and regulations or



framing constitutions. They had the appearance of parliamentary committees—only they did not take evidence. They offered to the public ideas clothed in the cold precision of legal language. Meanwhile, the Christian wondered what the whole business was about. It struck the congregations that if you want to unite with other bodies you must move with them first and acquire some knowledge of them. Negotiations through professional brokers are not a good augury for happy unions. Naturally, therefore, the demand was for exchange of pulpits, inter-communion, mutual visits of congregations. This intercourse would resolve prejudices, promote friendliness. At present, the non-conformist thinks that episcopacy is popery. When he visits an Anglican Church, he may realise that a bishop is very much behind the scenes and that in daily life, a member of the Church of England comes into contact only with a pastor just as he does. He may even learn that a bishop is not a bogey but a man—human in spite of his office. The members of the Church of England think that a non-conformist stands next door to a nihilist; that he has no sense of worship because he does not use candles. They may learn by attending a Congregational Church that its members too may be pious. If they do not intone their prayers, they at least pronounce them with extreme unction. They may discover that their prayers are not so much extempore outpourings of the heart, as they appear to be. They are as stereotyped as prayer-book prayers. They may even recognise with joy that the Lord's Prayer has now become in both churches an intimation that the end of the worship is near and that nobody cares for its contents. The Indian Church is fascinated with the idea of courtship before marriage just when missionaries have begun to perceive the beauties of the compulsory marriage in India. This is the worst of fashions. Just when our girls are thinking of silk stockings, Western girls are reverting to bare feet. While we speak rapturously of courtship, Westerners are raving about Sheiks, cave-men and marriages arranged by parents. What a world! The mandate seeks to humanise the union and rescue it from ecclesiastical lawyers and legislators.

#### THE LAYMAN GETS THE PLATFORM

The mandate marks the advent of the layman. Somebody invented the compliment, the priesthood of the laity.

The man in the pew has taken it seriously. The idea persists that Church Union should be the business of ecclesiastics. The laymen have a place only as 'yes-men' and noddors. He gets into the committees not because he is thought fit to handle the subject but from a sense of fairplay that if you press an union on him, he must at least assent to it. The layman has ceased to understand his place—ceased to be a good boy and agree with everything said by others. He is becoming a nuisance. He asks questions and wants to be answered and not put off. He entertains even the notion that he could do better than bishops. The mandate represents this inconvenient state. The priest and the layman do not look from the same standpoint, do not understand things in the same way. The priest and the pastor has an exaggerated sense of doctrine—worship precedents as much as a judge—has a knowledge of Church history which warps his normal vision. He thinks that everything that separates man from man in religion should be treated as sacred. The attachment of the clergy to sectarianism is due to the fact that they were the cause of all schisms. I do not know if I am right in saying that each sect within the Christian Church has a priest or a pastor for its cause. The names of Luther and Wesley easily come to our mind. Being the cause of separation, they set great value on denominations. The layman sees otherwise. Fortunately he has no knowledge of church history. He does not know doctrines—at least in India. Differences in forms of worship represent customs to him—not any inherent differentiation in values. The Indian goes to one church rather to another by accident than by choice. The pictures on the wall are great masters to the clergy, but mere pictures to the laity. In his utter ignorance of the Church and its history, he can do daring things. While he may not have qualifications of the head for the solution of the problem, he has qualifications of the heart. When he meets a Christian brother, he shakes hand with him without asking to what church he belongs. Really he has other qualifications of a valuable type. He knows the world and has solved some of the problems of life elsewhere. That knowledge may be useful. This problem of union is a national problem as well. If we have developed the disease of sectarianism in the Church, we have developed a similar disease of communalism in politics. Both are caused by the same germ. It acts virulently in communalism and mildly in sectarianism. The layman may bring to bear his knowledge of the solutions of communalism on our sectarianism. He

diagnoses that the disease is the same and feels that one remedy may be effective for both. It would have been a highly instructive lesson if the laity and the clergy were asked to produce their schemes of union separately. In the mandate, the layman essays the problem which he thinks the clergy have not succeeded in solving.

#### MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH

That the pulpit and the pew have different angles of vision may be gathered from the resolution. In all attempts at Church Union we have to face one inescapable question. The differences of doctrine between the Churches do not now centre round the person of Jesus, as they did at one time. In Church Union our trouble is not with Jesus but with the Church. We all agree about Jesus but this does not unite us. We differ about the Church and this separates. The priest, the sacraments, and the methods of church government divide us. The priest and the pastor are different ways of looking at the same man. But their value differs according to the theory. The root problem is how we are to regard the different types of ministers, sacraments, governments that are to be found in different churches. Are we to regard them as true and false with the Catholic Church or as good and better as higher and lower—or as equal in efficacy and sanctity? In the course of the negotiation this refractory topic got either put down or pushed off as often as it arose. It is conceded that God blesses all these ministrations. They are different channels of God's grace. What prevents us then from declaring unequivocally and frankly that they are all equal and equally efficacious? I am afraid that here the negotiators have shown want of candour on the Anglican side and want of courage on the S. I. U. C. side. Anglicans while admitting that God has blessed both sides in their sacraments and church administrations, persist in speaking of validity and regularity. The Non-conformist ministry is valid but not regular. This obscures the fundamental recognition of equality. The S. I. U. C. does not firmly demand this recognition. They are delighted with this *mantra* of constitutional episcopacy. Poor souls! they think they have discovered it, when it was as old as the Church of England. Constitutional episcopacy means nothing more or less than episcopacy about which you can have mental reservations. Thus lulled, they do not perceive that there can be no union without equality.

Hence the endless talk about other things that do not matter. To the layman the stone which the ecclesiastics are trying to reject should be the corner stone of the union. There need be no formula, no concessions on any other topic, no need for compromises if equality of ministries is once granted. This is the unbridgeable difference between the lay and the clerical viewpoints. Equality of ministries, says the Church of England, should be the fruit of union. In the United Church, they say, there will be equality. The layman insists on equality at the start. Equality is not the result of union but the condition precedent of all union. If we unite at all, we unite as equals. The equality in the United Church is an eyewash. If the S. I. U. C. surrenders its forms of government, and adopts creeds and prayer books, where does the question of equality arise? An equation posits two quantities to be equated. If you transfer both to one side, there can be no equation. The layman brushes aside all talk of regularity and validity as legal quibbling or casuistry unworthy of the great subject. He insists that there should be this recognition of equality before union now and here, without qualification or mental reserve. This, he announces to be not only the basis of union but union itself. The mandate means that we should leave our offerings at the altar to make a confession of faith in the equality of ministries loudly.

#### HOW THE EQUATION WORKS

Let us look at the implications of this postulate. First, it signifies a new approach. Till now the whole problem was viewed from the side of the minister and now it shifts to the ministered. Are the sacraments of the different churches efficacious? The answer is they *will* be when the ministers who administer communion have equal authority. Now we answer, No: they *are* of equal efficacy because they affect the recipients in the same way. The various church governments are of equal value because the congregations feel they are equally useful to them.

Secondly, the problem is simplified. We move the problem from the murky atmosphere of wrangles about doctrines, dogmas, and sacraments, to the sunlight of a universal principle of equality. The canons of valuation adopted by the clergy are mystical and obscurantist. The new principle of equality is simple and universal. It appeals to reason and

emotion. It can be applied alike in politics, sociology and religion. We end communalism just as we end sectarianism by recognising the equality of communities—in theory and practice, in profession and precept.

Thirdly, the problem receives a new orientation. Union has so far been conceived exclusively in terms of structure. If the Church of England and nonconformist churches desire to unite, they must change their governments and constitutions and officers. Now it is conceived as essentially a moral recognition. Union is not something to be brought about but something to be recognised as existing. The affirmation of equality and adjustment of our conduct to the affirmation is, union—not it brings about union. The Church of England may remain just as it is, Presbyterian churches just as they are and yet there will be the feeling of union if we recognise the principle of equality. If equality is recognised, there can be no denial of intercommunion, intercelebration and exchange of pulpits. The variety of forms of worship becomes, as the Hindu always held, modes of satisfaction of the temperamental variations of the worshippers. There is no reason why a Church of England priest should not administer sacraments in a Presbyterian church any more than why a Presbyterian pastor should not administer it in Church of England. If every Christian has liberty to take his communion in the church he pleases, the principle of equality will be satisfied. Let the clergy wrangle if they like. Union is not amalgamation, is not structural alteration, but the feeling of brotherliness based on the recognition of equality.

Fourthly, the problem of union becomes a problem of the spirit and life and not of structure. We are learning this in politics. Union must start in the emotions and spirit of the people and not in the alteration of political institutions. Votes, special representations, weightage—are mere make shifts. If the Muslim and the Hindu do not feel brotherly by a perception of common humanity, all other devices are useless. This new approach to the problem deserves consideration. The existing denominations are left untouched. The doctrines, church polity and the ministers continue as they are. An episcopal minister may still cling to the belief that his ministrations are both valid and regular while that of others is merely valid without being regular. The laity leave them to their vanity. They declare they perceive

no difference. They recognise that God has blessed both the Jew and the Gentile, the conformist and non-conformist. They are alike blessed, notwithstanding the difference in ministries. On this rock of conviction the layman plants the union. On this irrefragable foundation he takes his stand. In this sense of equality is the birth of union. Church union is to make this feeling a permanent element in the mind of every member of every congregation. To express it in another way, so long as we feel that all Christians are worshippers of the same Lord, the secondary distinctions of methods and manners do not matter. They are all equally useful. If in communion, you feel you partake of the same Lord, it matters little who administers the communion and how he does it. All the servants have equal status, however different their office names may be. If in the church service or sacraments we do not get the sense of worshipping the same Lord, these distinctions do not matter. They are all equally useless. This is the new gospel of union which the layman desires to proclaim. We should undertake an immediate educative propaganda on these lines. We have to teach to the Christian the importance of distinguishing the essentials from non-essentials, the primary from the secondary. The ecclesiastics see the difference in secondary things and in union seek to remove them. The layman perceives the common basis in all worship and in union seeks to bring out this sense of commonness, leaving the secondary differences to shift for themselves.

Fifthly, the mandate discovers the solution in the development of a moral consciousness, whereas the existing schemes hope to find answer in common creeds or formulae. The layman's solution is moral and psychological. The churchman is legalistic and formal. The moral centre that serves as a bond is negative. The Indian Christian, though living in separate denominations does not feel separation. There are of course many sub-intellects who feel that these distinctions matter. Fortunately, they are a minority. The normal Indian Christian has a healthy mind in this matter and treats denominations as accidental misfortunes, not as spiritual assets. We want to convert this negative sense of non-separation into a positive feeling of brotherliness and comradeship. This we hope to do by making the Christian see Christ in every denomination, in every sacrament. It is the presence of Christ that equalises all instruments. We have not to encounter the feeling that the barriers are insurmountable as in the West. We feel we can surmount

every one of these barriers outside the altar—in the Church ; outside the Church in the world. We cancel differences by refusing to look at the hand that administers the communion but by persisting in looking at the Lord beyond him,—by looking at the other Christians, kneeling beside us. Eliminate the priest and the pastor, we unite because we see the common Lord.

### THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE: THE REGIONAL SCHEME

The recognition of the principle of equality gives another alternative which may be called the regional scheme. One great cause of disunion in the Church is not so much the existence of denominations but the existence of several of them in the same locality. An easy, if less ambitious, scheme of union proceeds on the basis of one church for one area. Thus stated the problem has a political parallel in the scheme of linguistic provinces—that is one province for each language area. At present each province has at least two or three communities speaking different languages. The adoption of this principle involves less change in the Church than in the State. In the Telugu districts, Baptists predominate. Between Madras and the Baptist area, Scottish Presbyterians are prominent. In the Madura district, American Congregationalists are in a majority. The London Mission has a contiguous area of its own. So also the Church of England in certain parts of the province. The first step in the programme of union would be to assign one province for one denomination. Other missions should withdraw from this area. All the Christians in the area to whatever Church they once belonged should go to the territorial church. Once we recognise the equality of churches, there should be no difficulty even in South India for all Christians in attending one church, if there are no rival missions. I do not think home boards will advance any objection if each major denomination can be assured of an area without a rival. The missionaries can easily reach an understanding on these lines. The minor missions may transfer their property as well as their congregations to the dominant church. We may rest assured if there are no rival missions in the same area, every Christian will go to the same church. This idea of one church in one locality may be applied to cities. Christians who like a particular church may transfer themselves to that area: for the rest—every Christian in the locality will go to that

church. This will give us five or six prosperous churches instead of twenty or thirty struggling and starving ones. The scheme proceeds on the equality of denominational values. I think this scheme can easily be implemented and will prove not only economical, but also give us single united Christian communities in fairly large territories, eliminating conflicts for all practical purposes. Denominations may then unite for wider purposes. The autonomy of denominations in matters of worship will be guaranteed. No sacrifice of spiritual values is demanded.

#### THE SANCTIONS OF THE LAITY

To return to the mandate, it may be asked how it can be implemented. To call off negotiation does not solve the question. We may just indicate how the laity can achieve union through the resolution. First, a clear unequivocal declaration of equality of ministries and church governments should be formulated. Second, the laymen of all the denominational churches should pass resolutions affirming it. Third, they may call upon their own pastors, priests, bishops, committees, councils and assemblies to subscribe to this creed. Fourth, congregations should occasionally interchange that is a Church of England congregation shall attend a Presbyterian church one Sunday and take communion there and invite a Presbyterian congregation to come to their church and take communion another Sunday. Lastly, if the ministers make trouble; the congregation should refuse to come to communion till brother Christians are allowed on equal terms to the table. This is not spiritual non cooperation. This is a declaration in action that we value Christ and Christian equality more than church services and sacraments. We should like to see the clergyman who will oppose the moral enthusiasm of his flock to unite with others in Christ. This solution can be applied to the temple entry reform. Legislation, though necessary, cannot supply the moral power. If the priests refuse entry to savarnas in the name of God, the savarnas in the name of the same God should refuse to enter the temple. I know few temples can get on without the offerings of savarnas. In applying this method to the Church union, we incidentally pave the way to the solution of the temple entry problem.

#### CHURCH UNION AND THE INDIAN

'The resolution' was passed by Church members who believe in the Church as it exists and who are born and brought



up in it. It was the 'way out' of the difficulty which the commonsense of the ordinary Christian has found out. The convert looks at the whole movement from a different angle. He welcomes the solution as it shows the first glimpses of an Indian way of thinking.

It appears to a convert indescribably funny that anybody should entertain the idea that by knocking together the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, Swedish and Lutheran and American churches, an Indian Church would be produced. But for the fact that the religious man rarely has any sense of humour, the scheme would never have survived the mirth it provokes. It is a capital joke.

We have already stressed the fact in the article on the Church that union could only be achieved by replacing church consciousness with Christ consciousness. The process of denominational coalition with endless talk as to the value of denominational emphases necessarily intensifies church consciousness. This has to be avoided at all costs. Even if we have denomination, let them float on the circumference of our consciousness—never allowed to move towards the centre or strike roots in our mind. To be church minded is fatal to spiritual development. The mandate arrests the tendency towards creating emotional, sentimental attachments to sects.

Nor do we think it wise to create huge organisations among Christians at this stage before the wealth and richness of Indian heritage passes into the Church. To crystallise now is to shut out the inflow of Indian spiritual culture. Before we combine; let the sluices of the great Indian culture be opened for the inundation of the Christian mind. We do not know what our spiritual inclinations and impulses will be or how we may be moved to act when the Christian Church establishes contact with the great Indian tradition.

Church union has to wait till we are settled about the Church. We have already explained how the Indian mind will adventure to find out Christ's idea of the Christian task, the meaning of the Kingdom of God, the mysteries of Christian birth. Till this adventure progresses, we can have no fixed attitude towards the Church. We may retain it as a secondary institution, serving the lower spiritual need. We may develop rapidly the ashram idea, in which case the Church

may cease to occupy anything like a central place in our thoughts. We need a Church which is not an institution but an instrument—a flexible and pliant weapon which never settles down. If we seek to perpetuate the early apostolic conditions, of direct leadership of the Holy Spirit, then again, the Church will recede to the background. We may find the Church to be an 'obstacle.' Why then Church union? We shall first seek the Lord and then return to the less urgent problems of the Church and Church Union.

The Indian mind has always regarded variety of worship as serving temperamental needs—not as possessing anything like eternal values. The sub-normal require highly ritual churches with priests, ceremonies. Men with normal intellectual attainments feel at home in a simpler and less ornate form of worship. Men above normal may worship God in truth and spirit. These forms are suited to different stages of development. The mandate thus aligns us with the Hindu spiritual outlook. Thus in the line taken by the resolution, there is safety as well as possibilities of development. It expresses the commonsense of the Christian, Christ sense of the congregations, and the Indian sense of the Indian Christians. It deserves to be welcomed as the first original movement of the soul in the Indian Christian.

#### PARALLELISM WITH NATIONAL PROBLEMS

Throughout this article we have drawn attention to the similarity of national problems to the church problems and to the possibility of one solution applying to the other. This unity of life between the Church and the nation should be studied. The federal scheme draws its inspiration from the Government of India Act. The regional scheme approximates the denominational situation to the language problem of the State and suggests a common solution. Non-cooperation may show the way to temple entry and church union. The Church of England represents the British political genius. Luther, the German secular genius. The Oxford Conference reminds us that the Church is a divine society. This may not be obvious. The liking of this divine society for playing the second fiddle to the State is writ all over Church history. A divine society should produce a pattern which the world might adopt and not cast itself into the mould of the State. The Church has always taken the State pattern. This creates doubts whether

the real divine society may not be something else than the Church.

The question of Church Union has not yet been studied objectively and scientifically. What we need is more data, more detached thinking, more intensive exploration of the alternative possibilities. If a commission could be appointed of men of mature understanding and spirituality to examine witnesses, to call for suggestions, to test schemes and then make a report, it will help the Indian Christian to make up his mind intelligently.

# **CHAPTER X**

## **THE**

### **SOUTH INDIA CHURCH UNION MOVEMENT**

**BY D. M. DEVASAHAYAM, B.A., B.D.**

#### **PART I**

#### **THE PROPOSED SCHEME OF UNION**

##### **A. HISTORICAL RESUME**

The hope has been repeatedly expressed that the promotion of Christian unity is likely to prove one of the great contributions of the churches in the mission fields to their mother-churches in the West. In recent calls to union, there is a tendency to emphasise the jealousies, rivalries and animosities between different Missions in this country and elsewhere in the past, and point to the growing desire for union as a recent development. But the roots for Christian unity are struck far deep. A peep into the history of Christian Missions will show that, while the Protestant Reformation had promoted a fissiparous tendency in the Christian Church, the Protestant missionary movement brought the churches together. The missionary movement in the West grew out of evangelical movements on the continent of Europe and in Britain. One of the earliest missionary societies, the London Missionary Society, was an interdenominational organization, whose main concern was the promotion of the spread of the Gospel, without any sectarian motive. The early history of Missions in India also shows that the great denominations both in the North and in the South worked in a friendly spirit. The differences naturally receded into the background with the discovery of the missionary message which emphasised the fundamentals of the Gospel. Hence conferences of representatives of different Missions soon became a normal and important feature of missionary work. In the early days when the C. M. S. missionaries came to Tinnevely where the Lutheran missionaries were already working, there was no insistence on episcopal ordination and priests ordained by other priests functioned on an equal footing with episcopally ordained ministers. When in 1816

the Anglican Metropolitan ordered that all priests should be ordained by bishops only, there was trouble, and one of the most revered of the early missionaries, the great Rhenius, separated himself from the church. Denominational loyalty is not altogether absent amongst Indian Christians, but, where it is present, it is found along with a spirit of tolerance and a sense of solidarity with other Christians. In all denominations, however, to this day could be found members who sincerely believe in the superiority of their own version of the Christian faith. But the comparative absence of denominational loyalties amongst Indian Christians has, without doubt, contributed immensely to the growth of Christian unity among all Protestant Christians in this country. There is, therefore, sufficient justification for the hope entertained by the churches of the West that their daughter churches in the 'mission fields' would give a powerful impetus to the union of Christendom.

The study of the present Union Movement in South India need not carry us into a detailed treatment of the various union movements in the past. But we may note that the Presbyterians seem to have been in the vanguard, for in the year 1900 they formed an All-India Presbyterian Union. In 1908, its South Indian section joined with the Congregational Union to form the South India United Church. With this church, the Lutherans (of the Basel Mission) in Malabar joined in 1919. Definite proposals for a united Church in India were considered at a meeting of representatives of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches held at Allahabad in November 1918. This was only prevented from taking further shape by the Tranquebar proposals, which have attracted world-wide attention on account of the bold attempt to include several dissimilar denominations like the S.I.U.C., the Wesleyans, and the Anglican.

The Tranquebar call for Union issued in May 1919, which thus interrupted the more natural course followed by the S.I.U.C., to unite with similar churches in the North, was conceived, evolved and sent out all on a sudden by Indian ministers and some missionaries, who had gathered together for a conference on Evangelism at the historic town of Tranquebar. Ministers belonging to the S.I.U.C., the Anglican, the Wesleyan, the Lutheran and Mar Thoma Churches took part in the conference for two days. But the S.I.U.C. and

Anglican members alone remained on the third day and subscribed to the Tranquebar Manifesto.

The main portion of the statement is as follows:—

"In this Church we believe that three scriptural elements must be conserved. (1) *The Congregational* element representing "The whole church", with "every member" having immediate access to God 'each exercising his gift for the development of the whole body'. (2) We believe it should include the delegated, organized, or *Presbyterian* element, whereby the church could unite in a General Assembly, Synods or Councils in organised unity. (3) We believe it should include the representative, executive or *Episcopal* element. Thus all three elements, no one of which is absolute or sufficient without the others, should be included in the Church of the future, for we aim not at compromise for the sake of peace but at comprehension for the sake of truth.

"In seeking union, the Anglican members present stand for the one ultimate principle of the *Historic Episcopate*. They ask the acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character." The South India United Church members believe it is "a necessary condition that the Episcopate should reassume a constitutional form" on the primitive, simple, apostolic model. While the Anglicans ask for the historic Episcopate, the members of the South India United Church also make one condition of union, namely the recognition of *spiritual equality* of the universal priesthood of all believers and of the rights of the laity to their full expression in the Church. They ask that this principle of spiritual equality shall be maintained throughout at every step of the negotiations.

Upon this common ground of the historic Episcopate and of the spiritual equality of all members of the two churches, we propose union on the following basis:—

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as containing all things necessary to salvation.
2. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.
3. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted.

We understand that the acceptance of the fact of the episcopate does not involve the acceptance of any theory of the rights of episcopacy nor any doctrinal interpretation of the fact. It is further agreed that the terms of union should not involve

the Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, and we find it no part of our duty to call in question the validity of each other's orders."

It need not be added that the thirty three ministers who signed the statement were in no way official representatives of their churches and therefore concluded it with these words:—"While not committing our respective bodies, we unofficially and individually with the blessings of God agree to work towards union on such a basis."

The next landmark in the movement was the publication of the *Proposed Scheme of Union* ten years later. The story of this decade of negotiations is worth remembering. It was to the S. I. U. C. General Assembly held at Calicut in September 1919, that the Tranquebar statement was first officially presented. It requested the Councils of the Assembly to consider the desirability or otherwise of adopting a constitutional episcopacy, the absolute equality of the ministry and membership in an autonomous and independent church. The above document is deserving of careful study and will throw considerable light on the further developments that followed, as we shall see latter. The first Joint Committee of the representatives of the S.I.U.C. and the Church of England met at Bangalore City in March 1920, which stated that "believing that the principle of the Episcopate in the constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the church, we accept it as a basis of unity without raising any other questions about episcopacy." The second meeting of the Joint Committee was held at Bangalore in December 1920, and in the interval the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops had taken place. The result was that the Anglican representatives were not in a position to stand by the equality of ministry contained in the Tranquebar statement. Hence the second meeting of the Joint Committee felt that all they could do in view of the Anglican attitude was to propose "*a dual ministry, only part of which would be recognised throughout the whole church.*" The S. I. U. C. General Assembly held at Nagercoil in September 1921 stated, on the other hand, that all that they would do to promote union was the acceptance of a constitutional episcopacy as defined already in 1919 and that they could not enter union that interfered with their intercommunion with other churches. The fourth meeting of the Joint Committee suggested a commis-

sioning service which would not be re-ordination or the repudiation of any previous ordination. This received the assent of all the members present "except perhaps one representative of the Anglican church." This proved unsatisfactory to both the churches concerned. At the invitation of the S. I. U. C. General Assembly held in 1923 in Ceylon to other interested churches to join the union movement, the Wesleyan Methodists of South India joined in the negotiations from 1925. At the sixth meeting of the Joint Committee "a resolution was adopted which suggested a period of fifty years, during which there would be really a dual ministry." But it was felt by many that this was most unsatisfactory and to some it looked as though the negotiations must speedily come to an end. New enthusiasm and new determination were brought to the task by the nine delegates who attended the World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne in August 1927. The seventh meeting of the Joint Committee, therefore, set itself to the task of consolidating the work already done and this resulted in the publication of the now famous *Proposed Scheme of Union* in 1929 (See *Church Union News and Views*, July 1930).

The Lambeth Conference met in July 1930 and gave its approval to the *Proposed Scheme of Union* as coming within the traditional framework of faith and order. But the proposed united church of South India would not be in full communion with the Church of England or even the North Indian branch of that Church, for the time being, until irregularities from the Anglican standpoint were all removed.

The next stage in the Union Movement was reached in the *Resolutions of the 15th General Assembly* of the S. I. U. C. held in Madras, September 26 to October 1, 1935. That the negotiations that preceded the formulation of the scheme were strained is seen from the above account abridged from the official 'Brief History' given in the official organ of the Joint Committee. The tension did not decrease after the issue of the Scheme and its general approval by the Lambeth Conference. Hence during the period that followed, various modifications were made. It was the fifth edition of the Scheme that was presented to the Assembly and in the opinion of the S. I. U. C. Union Committee, the limits for alterations had already been reached. The Report of this Committee pointed to certain improvements effected and made the suggestion that



men of approved Christian character, without the usual educational and theological qualifications necessary for ordinary presbyters, might be ordained as presbyters for the celebration of sacraments alone. The Report raised a storm of opposition in the Assembly with the result that the following Resolutions were passed :—

"The General Assembly having heard the report of its Committee on Church Union and the discussion which has taken place in the Assembly and having before it the resolution of six of the Church Councils finds that considerable sections of the Church have grave difficulties still with a number of points in the Scheme of Union.

"The Assembly accordingly puts it on record that it seems necessary to allow some years more for the discussion of these points within the Councils and Churches of the S. I. U. C. with a view to arriving at such a degree of unanimity as will make union possible."

"In the meantime the Assembly instructs its Committee while continuing the negotiations with the representatives of the other two Churches concerned to endeavour to lead the Churches into contacts of fellowship and service, in order that by such means the members of the different churches may even now grow into an increasing measure of unity and mutual understanding."

The position of the S. I. U. C. was further stated in the Resolution of the Sixteenth Assembly held at Trivandrum (Travancore) on October 13-16, 1937. It called for a rewording of the declaration regarding the Creeds, recording their acceptance only as *ancient witnesses* to the faith and for a modification of the requirements of the faith of a candidate for ordination on a more liberal basis than the scheme demanded by its insistence on "his sincere belief in the truth witnessed to by the Nicene Creed." But special attention has to be drawn to resolutions regarding intercommunion and intercelebration before Union and the provision for lay celebration of the Lord's Supper. These are as follows :—

- (1) Resolved that as a confirmation of the mutual recognition of the Ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the three negotiating Churches, so clearly expressed in different ways in the Basis of Union and in the governing principles of the Church, the General Assembly urges the Joint Committee to take steps to secure the adoption of the practice of intercommunion and intercelebration between the negotiating churches before

union. The Assembly believes that if this is done, one of the chief obstacles to Union would be removed."

- (2) It is at present the practice in some areas of the S.I.U.C. to license suitable men to conduct the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Assembly urges that provision be made in the Scheme to permit a Diocesan Council, if it so desires, to frame rules with due safeguards for the granting of licenses to laymen of proved Christian character and experience for conducting the celebration of the Lord's Supper in particular places and for definite periods of time."

The Assembly then proceeds to ask the Councils to report to the Assembly of 1939 whether they are prepared to accept the Proposed Scheme if these modifications are made. These resolutions would therefore formally come before the Joint Committee towards the end of December 1939. But it has 'informally' considered them and pronounced the impossibility of any real change in that direction.

## B. OPPOSITION TO THE SCHEME

It is hardly known in other countries that the Union Movement met with considerable opposition from its very inception. It was made out to the outside world that Indians were solidly in favour of the Scheme and would come together on its basis, if only they were left alone without any interference from their mother churches in the West. For a long time many missionaries and several Missionary Societies were silenced on this plea. But Indian opposition was asserting itself and gathering volume all the time, till it made itself felt in the Councils.

The Tranquebar statement called forth opposition for various reasons from various quarters. The *Christian Patriot*, a long-standing, influential and independent Indian Christian organ (which has unfortunately since ceased publication) opposed the movement. The Bangalore Conference Continuation, an independent Indian Christian Conference which has been holding its annual sessions for the last twenty-three years in Bangalore and other important centres of the province, joined in the opposition. The Conference adopted the following resolutions as early as the year 1920, and

forwarded the same to the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops held in the same year :

(1) That this Conference of Indian Christians consisting of members belonging to the Anglican, Wesleyan, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, S. I. U. C. denominations, held at Bangalore, is of opinion that the several denominations of the Christian Church are in all essential respects within the one Church Catholic, and that in the interests of true Christian fellowship and for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in this land, a recognition of the equal status of the denominations within the one Church of Christ, and their ministries as of equal validity is necessary.

(2) That such recognition should be given effect to along the following lines:—

(a) Ministers may receive due authorisation to minister fully and freely in the churches of other denominations, it being understood that the above authorisation is not to be regarded as reordination or as repudiation of the present position of their ministers as validly ordained. Ministration would mean preaching (interchange of pulpits) and administration of sacraments.

(b) All the denominations should recognise fully the members of one another and admit them to the Lord's Table.

(3) That in the opinion of this Conference, further negotiations towards union of an organic character should not take place until the above two resolutions have been given practical effect to and until the Indian Churches have attained financial and administrative independence, which, it is hoped, will conserve the best elements of Indian religious experience.

It is remarkable how it corresponds almost exactly to the stand taken by the S.I.U.C. at the present time with its demands for intercommunion and intercelebration before Union.

Reference may also be made to the South Travancore Young Men's Retreat, which issued a Manifesto in May 1931, criticising the Scheme. The continuous attention given to the problems of church union in the Retreat for about a decade equipped the members to face the issues intelligently when the time came. The South Travancore Evangelical Association which came into existence in the year 1935, also contributed its share to the volume of opposition.

The course of the negotiations also indicates the official opposition within. The negotiations came very near breaking

point several times over the one issue of the ministry. The demand of the S.I.U.C. for intercommunion and intercelebration before Union is amply justified as the only guarantee that will secure the recognition of the equality of the ministries and members of the uniting churches even after union.

It is begging the question to say that "the only full answer to the desire for intercommunion is the consummation of the Union itself." The Church of England established perfect fraternity with the so-called "Catholic" churches without demanding organic union. The only consideration for treating organic union as a means to the end of intercommunion is the age-long question of ministry. But even this argument blinks the fact that the Scheme does not offer equality of ministry and establish perfect fraternity even within the united church. But the S.I.U.C. never bargained for union on such an inferior status or for becoming a closed church.

It is significant that even the Madras Representative Christian Council, held in Madras in August, 16-18, 1933, came to the following conclusion on "The Unity of the Church":

"The discussion revealed the belief that in spite of the apparent divisions of the Church in South India, a large measure of unity can even now be said to exist. It was felt that this unity should not express itself in any form of organic union which involves a rigid constitution with uniformity of worship, because such an organisation would be contrary to the genius of India. A very simple form of organisation, allowing for wide diversity of belief and practice and making possible the uniting into one body of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ commends itself to the Indian mind. Some feel that this unity of all believers should begin with and particularly express itself in common participation in the Lord's Supper.

The Rev. J. C. Chatterjee, the President of the All Indian Christian Conference held at Madras in 1928 in his Presidential address uttered a word of warning to the Union Movement in the following terms: "To my mind all our talk about church unity is premature, for by whatever names we may like to distinguish our churches, practically none of them has achieved an independent church life. Till then we can only talk of the union of missionary societies and not of the Indian Church. I must frankly state my belief that church

unity as well as the establishment of a truly national church can only be achieved by spontaneous enthusiasm resulting from indigenous movements from within the Indian Christian community and not by elaborate conferences and constitution-making on Western lines, functioning under Western guidance." Perhaps the one Indian organisation that was qualified to deal with the problems of Church Union in India was the National Missionary Society and it is passing strange that the platform of the Society was not used for the purpose. All this is indicative of the narrow groove in which the Union Movement has been moving in India.

A few remarks may be made here as to the nature of the Indian support that has been canvassed in support of the scheme. Bishop Waller has an illuminating paragraph on the part played by Indians in the formulation of the scheme in his book, *Church Union in India* (P. 30) :

"It is often asserted that the pressure to unite comes from the Indians, and this is true, because the disadvantages and loss entailed by disunion are very evident to them: and they are the chief sufferers. Moreover, the historical reasons which lie behind our schisms in the West have comparatively little interest for them, nor are they deeply interested in the ecclesiastical problems discussed. But to say that they are deeply concerned to promote this scheme or, indeed, any scheme, of union would hardly be true. They are convinced that the Church should be one: they are dully resentful at the cleavages introduced by foreigners. They want a national expression of Christianity—an Indian church. If any Indian leader could show them a way of securing that, they would follow him, regardless of history in the West. If the way to union must be through long discussions and a particular scheme on which foreigners must unite, they will listen with attention to the debate and they will join in it for or against particular points; but their real feeling, perhaps, is rather that the sooner it is all over and they get union the better every one will be pleased. In the actual terms of union, in agreement on minutiae of the organisation, they are little interested."

Bishop Palmer gauges the situation more correctly when he says that what the Indian Christian is after is a *unity that belongs to simplicity*. The simple desire for union of the Indian Christian has been often misinterpreted as constituting support for this particular scheme. In evidence of this, we may here refer to *A Manifesto on Church Union* issued

in support of the Proposed Scheme in 1929, which simply urges the indifference of the Indian to the denominational differences that have come from the West as an argument for this particular scheme of union.

The Indian members of the Joint Committee issued a letter to religious journals in Great Britain and America, in April, 1936, i.e. soon after the opposition of the scheme was recorded by the General Assembly of the S. I. U. C. in 1935. This is an appeal to the churches of the West to come to the rescue of the scheme. In the early days of the movement, foreign missionary bodies and home churches in the West were called upon by the sponsors of the scheme to keep their hands off this Indian movement, while ignoring Indian opposition at the same time. Now that opposition has asserted itself in the Councils of the S. I. U. C., the latter makes an attempt to throw the blame for the failure of the scheme on the Home Churches and would fain overcome Indian opposition with their aid.

We may now enquire how far the Indian Christians of the Anglican Church would subscribe to the features of the Scheme unacceptable to the S.I.U.C. We find it on record that one of the reasons for the restriction of the negotiations, on the part of the Anglicans to the four dioceses in South India was the difficulty that arose after the Lambeth conference in 1920 as regards the equality of ministry, which, it was thought, might be more easily overcome because "their membership came from a people that was homogeneous in race, language and customs." But while the territory involved in the negotiations was South India, the S.I.U.C. and the Provincial Synod of the Wesleyan Methodists were actually negotiating with the All India General Council of the Anglican Church, which itself was acting under the general direction of the Lambeth Conference. The S.I.U.C. which was for a long time prevented from seeking advice from the mother-churches in the West, was unequally yoked in the negotiations and this accounts for the dominating influence of the Anglican Bishops in the formulation of the scheme. We venture to assert that in case the negotiations were strictly confined to South India and Indians had their way, there would have been no departure from the Tranquebar Basis, and Union might have been consummated before this.

The main tradition of the Anglican Church in South India is evangelical, and even the High Church section could hardly be said to have been gripped by their peculiar doctrines. One of the most successful sessions of the Bangalore Conference was held at Palamcottah, the very heart of the Anglican Church in South India. That session with an overwhelming Anglican Indian majority was not able to make out a case for the scheme. On the other hand, a resolution was adopted that an alternate scheme should be prepared, based on the principles that are common to different denominations. It is in response to that that the Evangelical Scheme of Union to be considered later, was prepared.

The most prominent among the Indian signatories to the Tranquebar statement excluding Bishop Azariah, was the late Rev. S. G. Maduram, who was the foremost Indian clergyman of the time in the Anglican Diocese of Tinnevely. He continued a member of the Joint Committee for seven years, but soon became a vehement opponent of the scheme. He stated his conclusion in the following terms:

"The one terrible result to South India if this union were to take place—may God Almighty forbid it:—will be to kill evangelicalism in our land."

### C. CRITICISM OF THE SCHEME

Having reviewed the strength of the opposition to the scheme in South India, we may now pass on to a considered statement of the arguments that have been advanced against it. For this we have to be content with reproducing the contents of a pamphlet issued by the writer in August 1935 with the title: *The Proposed Scheme of Union: Its Broken Pledges*.

#### I. THE HISTORIC EPISCOPATE

The Tranquebar statement describes its attitude towards episcopacy in the following terms:—

"In seeking union, the Anglican members present stand for the one ultimate principle of the historic episcopate. They ask the 'acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character'. The S. I. U. C. members believe

it is "a necessary condition that the episcopate should re-assume a constitutional form", on the primitive, simple apostolic model".

Again: "We understand that the acceptance of the fact of episcopate does *not involve the acceptance of any theory of the origin of episcopacy nor any doctrinal interpretation of the fact*".

The statement is very clear and unambiguous. It contemplates without doubt "*episcopacy merely as a form of government which has persisted in the Church through the centuries and may as such be called historic, and which at the present time is expedient for the church in South India.*" (Scheme P. 7). It proceeds upon the assumption that the Historic Episcopate, when shorn of all its doctrines and implications, is only a form of polity, as good as any other, which need not come into conflict with the positive and negative witness of Protestantism as to what are and what are not the essentials of Christianity, and therefore harmless. There the statement stops.

The scheme, on the other hand, deliberately proceeds to make room for all the doctrines connected with the historic episcopate when it makes provision for the belief in the following words:

"Episcopacy is of divine appointment, and the episcopal ordination is an essential guarantee of the sacraments of the Church" (Scheme p. 7).

The Tranquebar conception of the historic episcopate is *anti-doctrinal*, whereas the scheme is *pro-doctrinal*. This alters the whole basis and character of the scheme, and is responsible for all the volume and verbiage and complexity of the same. It is built through and through on the rock of historic episcopate with all its doctrines. These doctrines and implications are worked out with the greatest care in every detail of the acts of the Church, which indeed speak louder than the words. All that is conceded to the evangelical is tolerance—as a member of the Church—in return for outward conformity.

The scheme implements this break with the Tranquebar pledge by introducing doctrines concerning the Church, the



ministry, the sacraments, and membership, connected with episcopacy, which in turn affect worship, government and the position of the laity.

Read sec. 2 of 'Basis' on "The Church and its membership", in conjunction with sec. 4 on the "The Sacraments" and also Chap. III Sec. I of 'Constitution' on Membership. In these sections, the institutional conception of the Church on which the doctrine of Apostolic succession rests is fully stated and worked out. Note that sec. 2 referred to here is an exact reproduction of Declaration 2: "Of the Church and its members" in the *Constitution of the Church of India Anglican*. The above relevant sections may be paraphrased as follows :—

(a) The Church, as it is constituted, is the very Body of Christ. Membership in the Body of Christ presupposes and is constituted by membership in the Church. That is, no connection with the Head of the Church could be established except through the Church; mere faith in Christ is not enough for salvation, independently of the Church. Briefly put there is no salvation outside the church.

(b) This salvation or incorporation into the Body of Christ is effected by means of baptism, and continuance in this state of grace is maintained by the various sacraments provided in the Church. The number of sacraments is not stated and all the seven sacraments may well be practised in the Church. Particular reference is made to absolution, and ordination is given all the character of a sacrament, and confirmation is looked forward to as the rule of the Church.

(c) Sacraments which confer salvation and confirm and maintain the same and are therefore necessary for salvation, depend for their efficacy on the priest. And priestly ministrations are inefficacious unless the priest has been rightly ordained by a bishop. Even the functions of a bishop cannot be exercised effectively and are invalid, unless he has been duly consecrated by three bishops laying their hands on him.

(d) All these doctrines are given a finishing touch by the doctrine of the One Holy Catholic Church, which is interpreted to mean that there can be only one church in a particular place, a province, a region, in a country, in a world. This one Church is the Church which was established by the Lord with

his Apostles as its officers and its present officers are only such as can trace their unbroken succession to the Apostles. The churches constituted outside the pale of this one Church are guilty of the sin of schism. Read, Basis, sec. 1. para 3 and sec. 7. This doctrine of Church unitarianism accounts for the Anglican aversion to and repudiation of any idea of federation.

The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon has fully carried out its Declaration No. 9 which says that:—

"It will seek to enter into union with any bodies of Christians .....which are not in communion with it, provided always that by such union the inheritance of truth and grace which it has received with its Catholic Faith and Order be not impaired but rather established and strengthened."

## II. SPIRITUAL EQUALITY

The Tranquebar statement concerning spiritual equality is as follows:—

"While the Anglicans ask for the historic episcopate, the members of the S. I. U. C. also make one condition of union, namely, the recognition of spiritual equality, of the universal priesthood of all believers, and of the rights of the laity to their full expression in the Church. They ask that this principle of spiritual equality shall be maintained throughout at every step of the negotiations."

Again : "It is further agreed that the terms of union should involve no Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, and we find it no part of duty to call in question the validity of each others' orders."

Later : "As soon the first bishops are consecrated, the two bodies would be in intercommunion, but the further limitation of existing ministers with regard to celebrating the communion in the churches of the other body might still remain. In accordance with the principle of spiritual equality we desire to find some means to permit ministers of either body to celebrate the communion in the churches of the other body."

The Scheme does not fulfil this promise of the spiritual equality of members and ministers of the uniting churches.

## (i) INEQUALITY OF MEMBERSHIP

(a) *Anglican Members.* The members of the episcopal section of the church are at liberty to refuse the ministrations of the non-episcopal ministers. In interpreting what is called the Pledge, the Episcopal Synod and Standing Committee (Calcutta, January 29-Feb. 5, 1935) explicitly give the assurance in their Resolution "that to no former Anglican congregation shall a non-episcopal minister be appointed, or be sent for occasional celebrations of the Holy Communion," and that "opportunity for securing the ministrations of episcopally ordained clergy will not because of the union be withdrawn from any congregation which now enjoys such ministrations." The scheme looks forward to the time "when all the members of the church shall be willing and able to receive communion equally in all of its churches." through the extinction of all non episcopal ministers or otherwise, and "it is the resolve of the Church of South India to do all in its power to that end." Read section 16 of Basis and especially Section 13 of Governing Principles.

(b) *The defective character of Non-Anglican membership.* While the superiority complex of the Anglican members is thus safeguarded, the Anglican Note in the Scheme commending the adoption of Confirmation must be taken to mean that the members of non-episcopal churches are defective in their membership and are accepted only in the hope that,

"The goodness and long suffering of God is leading them to repentance." (*Church of India Constitution.*)

With a view at least to partially remedy this defect, the scheme suggests (Constitution Chap. IV Sec. 1) that the bishop might be asked to preside at the services in which admission is given into full membership of the Church. It is also stipulated that a prayer similar to that offered at Confirmation should form part of such services. Above all, the scheme looks forward to removal of all irregularities by the adoption, by general agreement, of common forms of service.

## (ii) INEQUALITY OF THE MINISTRIES

The spiritual equality of the ministries of the uniting churches is the all important matter, the equality of membership being largely a corollary of the same. The scheme grants equality in the administration of the Church both to members and ministers. But the statements

made from time to time about the equality of the ministries constitute a study in equivocation. The latest attempt emphasises the imperfection of the ministries, avoids reference to the *commission in ordination as apart from the grace*, which latter alone Christ is said to have "bestowed with undistinguishing regard on all their ministries and has used them all greatly to His glory". When the scheme says, "All are real ministries of the Word and the sacraments nor can any Church say that the sacraments and other ministries which He has blessed are invalid", that evidently embodies the limitation which the Declaration of Anglican Bishops in July 1923 on non-episcopal ministries imposed by the words, "within their several spheres." Even astute Free Church theologians in England were misled by equivocation and were astounded when confronted by these qualifying words. The Resolution of the Episcopal Synod and Standing Committee 1933 with regard to toleration of intercommunion on specified occasions bolts the door completely on the recognition of the equality of the ministries, when it says:

"That it should not be interpreted as conveying the impression that in its opinion the ministries of other Christian bodies, at present in separation from us, are of equally certain validity or identical with those of the Churches which have retained the succession of bishops."

In view of this blatant and unequivocal refusal to recognise the equality of the ministries, the pledge of spiritual equality stands broken unmistakably. Bishop Palmer evidently does not agree with the above Resolution, which goes against the spirit of the Union negotiations. He is reported to have written in a letter to the *Times* (6-1-1933) as follows:—

"What the scheme (for Church Union in South India) rejects is the theories that it is impossible that an Eucharist can take place without an episcopally ordained minister. The scheme proposes to recognise the non-episcopal ministers of the churches which enter the Union as ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the United Church, and to allow any one who wishes, but to compel no one, to resort to their ministrations.....The acid test of a Church's life is whether it is able to convert pagans at home or abroad.....However widely or however long the opinion that the Eucharist cannot take place without an episcopally ordained minister may have been held in the Church, it appears to be devoid of support from Scripture and inconsistent with the experience of the non-episcopal post-Reformation Churches."

The patience of the Evangelical Churches has been so sorely tried in this matter that it is useless to look for any statement of equality that will be found to be satisfactory and the only guarantee of this equality is the practice of the inter-communion and inter-celebration as an expression of unity that exists, and as a recognition of the equality of the ministries, which may lead to union in due course.

### III. THE RECOGNITION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS AND OF THE RIGHTS OF THE LAITY TO THEIR FULL EXPRESSION IN THE CHURCH

It is significant that the Tranquebar statement stands by the Protestant doctrine of Universal Priesthood and the full spiritual rights of the laity. The doctrine concerning the ministry embodied in the scheme claims divine authority and commission through the sacrament of ordination, and places the minister on a pedestal, which need have no relation to his spiritual qualifications. They are regarded as "sacramental men," belonging to a different category from that of the laymen. It may be noted that the scheme approves also of different grades of ordination in accepting the three-fold order of bishop, priest and deacon.

The scheme, in debarring the laymen from the celebration and the administration of the Lord's Supper, goes against the practices of the S.I.U. C., and the Wesleyans, and strikes at the root of the priesthood of all believers. The privilege of laymen for spiritual service at present enjoyed and exercised without let or hindrance as a spontaneous expression of his life is sought to be brought under control and regularised by special authorisation and even a ceremony similar to ordination, without laying-on of hands. But of course this does not confer power to administer the sacraments.

The demand of both the S. I. U. C., and the Wesleyan Church for providing for celebration and administration of the Lord's Supper by authorised pious laymen has been met by the suggestion from the Anglicans that a *fourth class of ministry* might be brought into existence for the purpose, possessing full equality of spiritual status (i. e., in the efficacy of the Sacraments but with restricted functions administratively and otherwise. The demand for lay celebration is made not only for making the benefits of the Holy Communion available to people who would otherwise have to go without it

for long periods, but for incorporating the principle of the priesthood of believers as such. The Anglican suggestion is made with a view to counteract the acceptance of this principle which finds its place in the Tranquebar statement itself. Even otherwise a ministry whose functions will be merely the ministration of sacraments would bring into existence an inferior order of clergy corresponding to purohits of this country, calculated to bring the ministry into contempt. The Joint Commission of the L. M. S. and Congregationalist bodies in Britain does not approve this extraordinary suggestion.

#### IV. THE COMPREHENSION OF EPISCOPACY, PRESBYTERIAN AND CONGREGATIONAL ELEMENTS

The Tranquebar statement says :—

“In this Church we believe that three scriptural elements must be combined.

(1) “The Congregational element, representing “the whole church”, with “every member” having immediate access to God ; each exercising his gift for the development of the whole body.

(2) “We believe that it should include the delegated” organised or Presbyterian element, whereby the Church could unite in a General Assembly synods or councils in organised unity.

(3) “We believe that it should include the representative, executive or episcopal element.

“Thus all three elements, no one of which is absolute or sufficient without the others, should be included in the Church of the future, for we aim not at compromise for the sake of peace but at comprehension for the sake of truth”.

Reference should also be made in this connection to the necessary condition that the episcopate should reassume a constitutional form “on the primitive, simple, apostolic model” embodied in the statement.

The Congregational element is reduced to a vanishing point. According to the scheme, the unit is not a congregation, but a pastorate, which may consist of more than one

congregation, aptly called the sphere of a pastor (with assistants, if any) in the 1929 edition. The autonomy of the congregation as a fellowship of believers gathered in the Sacred Presence has no place and the title authority given to the pastorate belongs to the pastorate committee. The congregational meeting is called only for the purpose of choosing the elected members of the committee which includes nominated and ex-officio members as well.

The Congregational principle stands denied and contradicted in the scheme, when the basis of the existence of the local congregation is said to have come from the Church Universal through the Regional Church and the Diocese functioning only as the representative of the One Holy Catholic Church.

The constitutional episcopate on the primitive, simple, apostolic model contemplated by the S. I. U. C. ministers at Tranquebar becomes vested in the scheme with all but supreme powers over all that concerns the spiritual welfare of the Church, viz.,

- (a) The faith and doctrine of the Church,
- (b) The condition of membership in the Church and the rules which govern excommunication from the Church,
- (c) The functions of the ordained ministers of the Church, and
- (d) The worship of the Church and any form of worship proposed for general use in the Church.

The limitation of episcopal powers contemplated in the scheme is of such a doubtful character that the episcopate could easily function as the fountain of all authority, with all the usual prerogatives associated with it. There can be no doubt that what emerges from the scheme is the historic episcopate, with all its powers and doctrines. There has been no independent and equitable approach to the problem of the combination of the three elements. Beliefs, practices and powers are all overweighted on the side of episcopacy.

## V. FRATERNITY WITH OTHER CHURCHES

This is implied in the simple ideal of the Tranquebar Statement, and is more clearly expressed in the resolution of the thirty S.I.U.C. missionaries at Kodaikanal, who gave their blessing to a United Church which when established should be

"An independent, self-governing church.....with full and free fellowship with all Christians throughout the world who wished such fellowship."

The resolution of the General Assembly of the S.I.U.C. in 1921, reiterated in 1923, deserves notice:

"That it expresses its opinion that the S.I.U.C. cannot enter a union which will cut it off from the churches with which it is now in full communion. It treasures its present catholicity too highly to take any step that would diminish or destroy the fellowship which it now enjoys in evangelical Christendom."

All the verbiage that clouds the issue in the last two paragraphs of Sec. 1 of the Basis should not blind us to the fact that what is aimed at is a closed Church. When intercommunion and intercelebration are not the rule even in the united Church, how could it culminate in free fellowship with other evangelical churches!

The Scheme Basis Sec 1 stipulates:—

(a) that the United Church will maintain fellowship with all those branches of the Church of Christ with which the uniting Churches now severally enjoy such fellowship.

(b) that it should continually seek to widen and strengthen this fellowship and to work towards the goal of full union in one body of all parts of the Church of Christ.

(c) that it will never use the provisions of the constitution that they will become barriers against a wider fellowship.

But these guarantees are hedged about in such a manner that the statement made by Bishop Azariah in *Re-union of Christendom* (p. 260) will still be true: "*In the early period of Union, no restriction shall be placed on ministers and members of the United Church against continued exercise of privileges of intercommunion and intercelebration which they may have possessed before the Union.*" Basis, sec. 15 says:



"The Uniting Churches also clearly understand that the United Church will have power to regulate to such extent and in such manner as it may from time to time think desirable, the relation with other Churches "

All this restriction is meaningless and unwarranted with a church like the S.I.U.C. which observes Open Communion and only signifies its becoming a closed Church by the union. It may be admitted that somewhat of a loose connection is allowed with the mother Churches and that non-episcopal ministers sent by them will be tolerated for thirty years. But the scheme guarantees close and intimate relationship with the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, and gives the most favoured church treatment. *Constitution* Chapter II Clause 16 contains the following provision :

"The Church of South India desires that the most cordial relations shall exist between itself and the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, and whenever need arises suitable arrangements shall be made for taking counsel together."

It is therefore probable that the time may come when the stipulation of the Tranquebar statement that "the terms of Union should involve no Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past" would be quietly ignored.

## VI. FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

This matter was not raised at the Tranquebar conference, as evidently it never anticipated any restrictions on the perfect freedom enjoyed by the S.I.U.C. The subject makes its first appearance at the third session of Joint Committee which generally approved of a Report on "Freedom of Worship." This note of freedom finds embodiment in the scheme when it aims "at conserving for the common benefit whatever of good has been gained by each body in its separate history". The Report adds :

(i) that this involves that the future Church will enjoy the freedom of worship which has characterised the S.I.U.C.

(ii) that "the United Church should refuse to fetter any congregation to a particular form of worship".

(iii) that there will always be some congregations which prefer to have no forms.

(iv) that the formulation of common nucleus of worship at the Lord's Table would be "causing offence to some Christians who hold firmly to non-evangelical forms", and that it seems better to postpone the preparation of even so small a prescribed order of service until it is asked for by all parts of

the United Church. The Report agrees to the baptismal formula and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper.

It is difficult to see how all this liberty has been safeguarded in the scheme, which dwells upon forms as if the question were only a choice between different forms, between historic and non-historic forms. Special forms (historic) are insisted on for ordination and consecration. The liberty of worship stands curtailed by the prescription of a lengthy list of central parts which are said to be fundamental to a true communion service. The compilation of the common Prayer Book is suggested for the use of the whole of the Church. The liberty of worship allowed to the congregation is restricted by the power of the presbyter to introduce new forms on his own authority as an experimental measure, and the powers of the bishop over worship in the Church. The ideal of unity contemplated in the scheme includes worship, and the tendency will surely be established for formalism in worship, which would cause offence to those who have conscientious objections to the regular use of forms.

It may be added that the scheme affords a definite place for extempore prayer. But the principle of comprehension is also used to make provision for all Anglo-Catholic practices, including the Mass, the Reservation of the Sacrament of Holy Communion etc. It must be remembered that any bias in favour of evangelical principles in the Church of England Prayer Book has been departed from in the Constitution of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, which is free even to use the Revised Prayer Book rejected twice by the Parliament. The Rejected Prayer Book has met with the approval of even some Roman theologians and priests. The Proposed Scheme appears to be more liberal than even the Church of India Constitution on the side of Anglo-Catholicism. There can be no doubt that this liberty will cause great friction in a Church which tries to comprehend extremes which are antagonistic to one another.

## VII. THE SCOPE OF THE UNION SCHEME

While it may be argued that the Tranquebar Conference took it for granted that it was laying the foundations for the Union of all Protestant or Evangelical Churches, it certainly failed to make specific reference to its objective in that direc-

tion. But any defect on this score was remedied in the First Preliminary Report of the Joint Committee, which says :—

"That the only union which Christians should aim at is the union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ".

But this *only* aim gives place in the 1929 Scheme to the *final* aim, which persists in all the later editions. This evidently registers a falling away from the ideal, as may be evidenced by the following passage from the Presidential speech of Dr. J. J. Banninga at the General Assembly of the S.I.U.C., held at Bangalore in 1919 :

"The Proposed Scheme is a practical attempt for union among those bodies. It is not an attempt to picture an ideal scheme for the Church as it ought to be. It is an attempt to bring together three branches of the Church, who each have their own traditions, and their own customs and their own organizations and therefore the whole task becomes a practical attempt to form a Local Union of certain parts of the Kingdom of God."

Hence the larger outlook is relegated to its own fate in the future as circumstances might dictate.

This limitation of scope is to be accounted for by the importation of the so-called Catholic Faith and Order into the simple evangelical basis agreed upon at Tranquebar. It has to be remembered that the negotiations, on behalf of the South Indian dioceses of the Anglican Church which contemplate entering the United Church, is being carried on by the General Council of the Anglican Church in India acting under the general direction of the Lambeth Conference, whereas the S.I.U.C., leaders have been rather fighting shy of advice from their mother Churches in the West. Neither have they taken the trouble to seek the advice of other evangelical Churches in India. The logical result will be the estrangement of the United Church from the evangelical Churches in India and outside. The Church of Scotland Committee in advising the Madras Mission Council with reference to the proposal contemplated on behalf of the United Church for affiliation with the World Presbyterian Alliance says :

"But new questions would arise were a Church constituted according to the proposed scheme to seek to be affiliated to the Alliance."

It must be remembered that Union movements are proceeding apace amongst evangelical Churches in North

India in one of which the Anglicans at the one extreme and the Quakers at the other are taking part. The All India Conference on Church Union held at Nagpur in 1931 did not accept the historic episcopate. The Landour Conference on Union held in June 1930 expressed the opinion that this scheme was unsuitable for achieving union among the churches of Northern India. Is the S.I.U.C. justified in prejudicing the cause of an All India Union of all the evangelical Churches which account for more than ninety per cent of the Christian population of India, by deciding in favour of union with the Anglican Church which forms hardly a tenth part of the Christian community? The resultant Church may after all find itself in a very unenviable and isolated position in this country.

#### VIII. INDIAN EXPRESSION OF CHRISTIANITY

It has been contended that acceptance of the scheme will pave the way for an Indian expression of Christianity. Basis Section 1, para says: "They trust, therefore, that the United Church, conserving all that is of spiritual value in its Indian heritage, will express under Indian conditions the spirit, the thought and the life of the Church Universal". This statement, according to its technical wording and as it is adumbrated later in the scheme, can only be interpreted as a deliberate check on the development of Christianity on Indian lines. Its main concern is for the imposition of what has been called "Catholic Faith and Order", to put it in less abstruse language, and the restriction thereby of the limits within which Indian Christianity should find its freedom. The characteristic of Indian religious heritage is simplicity in organization and tolerance of religious belief. The ecclesiastical systems evolved in the West are foreign to the Indian soil. While these systems may have rendered service of a high order in the West in their time, they cannot be claimed to belong to the essential elements of Christianity. Farther removed from the Indian spirit is the elaborate institutional conception of Christianity connected with the historic episcopate or the Papacy. Young Christian India does not need the trammels of heavy ecclesiastical machinery, but the simplicity of the Gospel in Faith and Order. Indian Christians were not brought into the Christian Faith by the preaching of Catholic Faith and order, but of the doctrines of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of man and simple faith in Christ. To attempt to foist this mediaeval system on Indian Christianity, when Hindu India is rising from its age-long slumber caused by the

domination of its own mediaeval conceptions, is to court disaster for the Indian Church and bring Christianity into contempt in modern India. Mediaeval churches and systems in the West are trembling in the balance and finding it hard to justify themselves under modern conditions. How can Indian Christianity consent to this yoke of mediaeval Christianity? The union that Indian Christians are after is a unity based on the recognition of the simplicity of the Gospel, and this elaborate hotchpotch of conflicting beliefs and practices could not appeal to the imagination of the simple Indian believer.

That the Union Movement would not proceed any longer on the basis of the *Proposed Scheme* could be seen plainly from the nature of the *Resultant United Church*, envisaged in it. It contemplates truly *Episcopal Church* in the traditional sense of the term, with the principle of apostolic succession maintained intact from the outset and for ever with the bishops functioning as the fountain of all religious authority without any serious limitation, possessing all their customary rights and privileges invested with all but supreme power over all that concerns the spiritual welfare of the church including (a) the faith and doctrine of the church, (b) the condition of membership in the church and the rules which govern ex-communication from the church (c) the function of the ordained ministers of the church and (d) the worship of the church and any form of worship proposed for general use in the church. The Scheme accords a *superior status to Anglican membership and congregation and especially to the Anglican ministers*, whose ministry alone will be recognised fully throughout the United Church and promises that "eventually every minister exercising a permanent ministry in it will be an episcopally ordained minister". Indeed inter-communion and intercelebration within the United Church will not be established until the non-episcopal ministries with their inferior status pass out of existence and give place to episcopally ordained ministers. Until then it will be a union which *does not bring about equality and fraternity* within the United Church between its component Anglican and non-Anglican sections! Though it is to be given the most favoured church treatment in taking common counsel, the Anglican Church of North India *will not be in full communion with the new United Church* until the irregularities from the Anglican stand-point are removed.

Further, the perfect fraternity that now exists between most of the evangelical churches with their practice of open communion will all pass away since the "United Church will have power to *regulate* to such an extent and in such a manner as it may from time to time be desirable, the relation with other churches." When episcopal ministry is fully established and internal unity attained thereby, the United Church could not but become a *closed church* on the Anglican model. The freedom enjoyed by the laity for religious ministry will be greatly curtailed and brought under control and the principle of the priesthood of all believers recognised in the practice of authorising laymen to celebrate the Lord's Supper in vogue in several evangelical churches will be abandoned. The *full freedom* of worship that *evangelical churches* enjoy will be curtailed by the imposition of historic forms and the tendency to formalism will assert itself with the advent of the Common Prayer book contemplated. Moreover all the Catholic practices and doctrines that have found their way into the Anglican Church will be freely allowed. It is no wonder that the principle "that the only union which Christians should aim at is the *union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ*" enunciated by the Joint Committee at the beginning had to be abandoned and relegated to the remotest future.

Finally *the freedom of the Indian Church to develop along indigenous lines* will be curtailed and limited to the four corners of "the Catholic faith and order," the possession of which alone enables the Lambeth Conference of 1930 to give its blessing to the South Indian Scheme. It is to be noted that all these limitations that the Scheme imposes on the Indian Church constitute not only a betrayal of evangelical Christianity, but are also a direct violation of the embodied guarantees in the Tranquebar Statement of 1919, on the basis of which the negotiations were started:

The attitude taken by the S.I.U.C. General Assembly of 1937 demanding the introduction of intercommunion and intercelebration before Union as a guarantee of the recognition of non-Anglican ministry, the provision for lay celebration of the Sacraments amounts to a rejection of the Proposed Scheme, and is thoroughly justified in the light of the observations made above regarding evangelical Christianity and the Tranquebar pledges. All the attempts made so far by the

Church of England for union with evangelical churches in different parts of the world have broken down over this one question of the recognition of ministry and the S.I.U.C. has only fallen in line with the rest of evangelical Christendom by insisting upon these conditions everywhere demanded. There was a danger of "deceiving the unlearned" Indian Church and using her dependent and immature character for carrying through the Scheme which must now be said to have passed. Church Union is an oecumenical matter and must be faced by all the churches throughout the world together and not accomplished in the intellectual backwaters of Christendom where the issues involved are not understood. It is significant that the stand taken by the S.I.U.C. at the present time was anticipated a decade ago by the Bangalore Conference Continuation, which passed resolutions on the same lines and sent them to the Lambeth Conference of 1920.

What about *the future of the union movement in South India*? Further progress is possible only by a fundamental change in the basis of the Scheme and getting back to the Tranquebar Statement at the least. It is a happy augury that the Bishop of Madras in a recent article in *Church Union News and Views* admitted that the negotiations were moving in a narrow groove, without recognising the historical protest and principles of Congregationalism in regard to the rights and privileges of the whole body of believers as definitely responsible members sharing equally the authority of the Church. More heartening is the change of heart that seems to underlie the "Outline of a Reunion Scheme" for the Anglican Church and the Evangelical Free Churches in England, in regard to the ministry and the celebration of the Sacraments, including lay celebration. If the Free Churches would stand by the negative and positive witness of the Protestant movement, as they have so far done, as a heritage to be jealously preserved, the Church of England is likely to pursue the path of conciliation indicated in the *Reunion Scheme* and give a new orientation to Union negotiations with evangelical bodies. If this spirit prevails, the travails of the church in South India during the past two decades would not have been in vain.

Much more rational and natural will be for the S.I.U.C. to get back to the position it occupied in 1919 before this wilderness journey of two decades in vainly exploring the possibility of union with the Anglicans and resume the

negotiations with North Indian evangelical churches for an all India evangelical union, which would easily be accomplished. It is idle to ignore the sharp cleavages in doctrine and practice between the so-called Catholic churches and Protestant churches standing for principles mutually antagonistic. It is far better to work for separate unions of the so-called Catholic churches on the one hand and of evangelical churches on the other involving no violation or sacrifice of principles, and work for a federation of all churches which will call for the betrayal of no cherished principle. So long as the principle of apostolic succession remains an essential condition with "Catholic" Churches, should we not be content to give expression to "the unity that already exists," by exploring the possibilities for a union that will have no reference to the Lord's Supper, which unfortunately has become the battleground of Christian denominations?

It remains of course true that the Indian Christian, if left to himself will make short work of the exclusive claims of the sacerdotal priesthood and establish union with full recognition of the ministries of the different churches and bring about intercommunion and intercelebration irrespective of any organic union, leaving aside the microscopic minority that may have yielded to "Catholic" sacerdotalism. The claim of the Anglican church to be a bridge church between Protestantism and Catholicism could not stand examination. It is a historical accident and an ecclesiastical anomaly, which accounts for its internal disunity between the Evangelicals and Catholics and far from being a model for the Union of Christendom ought to serve as a danger, which should be avoided in any deliberate pursuit for union. It is too hazardous to put our faith in such a bridge which is thus broken, to promote the cause of true Christian unity.

If there should be a reunion of all the churches under a catholic church, we should evolve a *new conception of Catholicism* which would bring in the vast majority of Christians, abandoning the ancient and mediæval conception which has had its day and has now become out of date.

In all programmes of general union, there are certain features to be preserved and certain dangers to be avoided. Foremost amongst the principles to be safeguarded is that of *diversity in unity*, the value of which Protestantism has fully established. The doctrine of church unitarianism which says



that there could be only one organised church, claims for the church what is not claimed even for the Godhead, and must be abandoned. On the other hand, no defence of the fissiparous tendency of Protestantism is advocated here; union of similar bodies may be pursued. The principle of federation may therefore be accepted as a method of union of dissimilar bodies of Christians. Secondly, church union movements *should assume a progressive character*, calling forth the devotion and allegiance of spiritually and intellectually progressive elements in the Church. To lay the emphasis on the historic aspect is to be courting disaster for the Church. So far as India is concerned, due regard should be paid to the *valuable Indian religious heritage*. Mammoth organization with highly centralised authority is repulsive to the spirit of Hinduism, of Christianity and of religion. Our Lord spurned the offer of the Kingdom of the world with all its authority and chose the way of the establishment of His Kingdom. The Church is already suffering from a disease which may be called *administrativism* and its spiritual character and function is in danger of being submerged by the dominance of the administrative side, which ought to be minimised. If Christianity is to thrive in India, the emphasis on Church as a pyramidal organization should be abandoned and the principle of the Fellowship of believers should not be interpreted to mean centralised organization that threatens to kill the spirit. There is a grave danger of secularisation of religion in these ways. The warning of the late Principal Forsyth that Union Movement was assuming the nature of mere Christian mass formation is analogous to that of the late Pope to the effect that it was pan-Christianism and should be given due consideration.

### CONCLUSION

The Indian Church is not competent intellectually and otherwise to construct a scheme on which Christendom can unite. It cannot afford to ignore the counsels of caution coming from its parent churches in the West. It can well afford to await the findings of conferences of theologians and ecclesiastics of the West who are tackling the problems arising out of denominational differences in a systematic and thorough-going manner. If the Indian Church could not be allowed to evolve itself along the simple essentials of Christian faith, it ought to be content to follow the West, and not assume the role of leadership in the great and difficult task of effecting a union of the Christian Churches.

## PART II

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

## A. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The stand taken by the S. I. U. C. General Assembly in its resolutions of the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions carries the Union movement in South India *from the region of sentiment to that of reality*. Leaders of the movement should therefore be more cautious, take stock of the situation, learn from the experience of the past and view things in broader light. We may enumerate certain considerations that in our opinion should be kept in view in planning for the future.

(1) It must be admitted that the *Proposed Scheme has failed to accomplish its purpose of bringing the Anglican and Evangelical churches into organic union*. Similar attempts in the West have all failed so far, breaking upon the rock of the ministry, as in India. It has, therefore, to be regarded as a universally ascertained finding that the evangelical and "Catholic" branches of the Church of Christ could not and ought not to be merged into a single ecclesiastical body. Such an eventuality will bring into existence a church on the model of the Church of England consisting of mutually antagonistic sections. These are kept together in that Church by the State connection and through sentimental, historical and national considerations, which do not exist elsewhere. The survival of this divided house of Anglicanism is a historical accident and an ecclesiastical anomaly, which ought to be regarded as a danger to be avoided rather than as an ideal to be followed. "Corporate unions which are not the outcome of preceding spiritual unity hinder rather than help the cause we have at heart, and conversely, where differences of conviction exist in vital points, formal separation may even make possible a fuller measure of spiritual unity." (*Next Steps on the Road to a United Church*, p. 3.)

(2) *The unity that exists in the "mission field" is a "unity that belongs to simplicity," and therefore evangelical in its essence*. As has already been pointed out at the outset, the missionary movement was itself evangelical in origin. The

missionary message laid the emphasis on the fundamentals of the Gospel and converts are comparatively free from denominational heritage. Its missionary character and calling must safeguard this emphasis for the Indian Church. The future Indian Church should not and cannot be built upon 'catholic faith and order,' which is a narrow and mechanical conception of Christianity, similar to *Sanatana Dharma* in Hinduism, which also exalts a particular historical manifestation of that great religion as the *norm* for all time. Protestant and evangelical movements have fought this ancient enemy and rescued the soul of Christianity from the thralldom of institutionalism, formalism, and superstition, and it should not be allowed to reassert itself in the name of Union.

(3) *It is foreign to the religious genius of India to raise up any closed and exclusive church.* Religious differences in Hinduism function not as warring sects but as interacting influences promoting the growth of the religious spirit. Evangelical Christianity cannot afford to lose the measure of this virtue that it possesses at present. But Hinduism, through its long age and experience, has developed this spirit of tolerance and mutual edification of religious sects, to a degree unparalleled elsewhere, and its adoption of a similar attitude to other faiths has produced a marvellous capacity for incorporating them within its bosom. Christianity will do well to cultivate this spirit of fraternity both within its own sphere and in relation to other faiths, so that it might, on the one hand, grow by adaptation to and assimilation of, all living forces of religion, wherever they may be found, and, on the other, extend its own usefulness thereby without arousing unnecessary antagonism. We are making this statement in the full conviction that the admittedly unique Personality of Christ will gather up all that is best in all religions and stand supreme.

(4) *Excessive organization and centralisation of authority is foreign to the Indian religious spirit.* This is in consonance with the spirit of Christ, who spurned the offer of temporal authority for establishing His Kingdom and chose instead the way of the Cross. We submit that the emphasis on organization and centralisation is a secular spirit, which if not guarded against, will kill religion in its own home. It transformed the mediaeval church into a temporal power, and the Lutheran denunciation of the Papacy as the seat of the Anti-Christ was not altogether without foundation. The spirit

that secularised the mediaeval Roman church did not altogether release its hold on the churches of the Reformation. It is not very long since Protestant Christianity recognised religious persecution as antagonistic to the spirit of Christ and developed a spirit of tolerance. The emphasis on close and centralised organisation of any religious persuasion tends to kindle a consciousness of worldly power, create a pseudo-religious spirit, and breeds exclusiveness and intolerance. We see it in our churches to-day and deplore them. Any accentuation of the spirit through the introduction of a larger and coercive central ecclesiastical machinery is sure to endanger the soul of the Indian Church. We also detect a secular spirit in the cry raised by certain advocates of Church Union that the interest of the Christian community demands the consolidation of Christians into one ecclesiastical organization. It makes the mistake of identifying the interests of the Church with those of the community and lowers the spiritual character and function of the Church. The secular danger to the church is not only an external erastianism that makes it subservient to the state, but also an internal approximation to a secular body through loss of the spiritual character of church membership and through constituting itself into an organization parallel to the state for securing and safeguarding its independence or for making its voice heard in the affairs of the world. We are not advocating an otherworldliness that is indifferent to the affairs of the world, but are emphasising a distinction between religious and secular methods. We hold that, instead of exploiting the church, political work should be carried on by separate and independent organizations, as at present. There is already a danger of our Church Councils and Assemblies succumbing to unhealthy political methods foreign to the Christian spirit. All this is due to an emphasis on organization in contradistinction to dependence on spiritual forces.

This distinctive spiritual character is not perhaps fully realised in the West, where religious and secular forces coalesce. The secret of the pre-eminence of India as a religious country lies in the fact that religion has mainly functioned by the operation of religious forces in a religious manner. Religion in India is maintained, not through control by centralised authority, but by a spirit that is surcharged in the atmosphere through the operation of spiritual forces from many and varied sources and centres. This precious gift of Indian religious heritage, Indian Christianity cannot afford to barter away for any

consideration. The future of Christianity does not depend upon an outward consolidation of Christian forces, but upon the cultivation of the religious spirit and the development of spiritual resources. Not by might or by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord. If the Church assumes the character of an outward secular force, it will be swept away by similar forces of overwhelming strength. They that take the sword shall perish by the sword. We do not intend to condemn all organization, but desire to enter a protest against the great emphasis that is laid on it at present. Protestant Christianity does not possess the spiritual stability of Roman Catholicism that has resulted from the great inheritance of spiritual treasures gathered around it from its past, and once it sets out on the road to secularism in any shape, its future may be regarded as uncertain. It is high time that Indian Christianity turns its attention to the development of centres for spiritual culture, without being carried away by the organising genius of the West. Our theological seminaries are manufacturing mission "workers" and are not devoting their attention to soul culture. The only cloud on the horizon that can be said to herald the showers of blessing to come is the growth of Ashrams, which, however, ought to function here-after more as centres of piety than as centres for social service. We would utter a humble word of warning to our Western ecclesiastical leaders to beware lest they lead the Indian church into the mirage of secularism, to which the church in the West yielded from the days of Constantine and from which it has not yet delivered itself. We are grateful to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for drawing attention to this matter in their letter of advice to the Madura Church Council in the following terms :—

"The religious history of India seems to indicate that Indians desire the maximum of local freedom with a minimum of central machinery. The Scheme in its present form seems to us to embody Western ideas of central organisation rather than the more distinctive Indian idea of spontaneity of expression, and we, therefore, question whether it carries out in the best way its purpose, so to organize the Church in South India, that it shall give the Indian expression of the spirit, the thought and the life of the Church universal."

At this point we may make a reference to a more radical position in regard to Church organization which is dealt with in detail by other writers of our group. It is an attempt to rise altogether above the idea of the church as an organised

body'. It goes beyond the congregationalist position, which did not go so far as to discard the perpetuation of the fellowship of believers as an organized body. Higher Hinduism lays the emphasis on *Sat-Sangh* or fellowship of believers, but not on its perpetuation as a group. Informal association and friendship of believers is recognized as a most helpful means for God-realisation. Here is a quotation from Tuka Ram, the great Mahratta Saint :—

"In holy places we find water and an image of stone, but in the society of good men we have the actual presence of God."

This reminds us of Our Lord's promise of His Presence to two or three gathered in His name. Whether we are warranted in interpreting this promise beyond this simple spiritual principle so as to justify our church organization of any kind is a matter that has been questioned. Modern scholars who hold that the conception of the church could not be attributed to Christ will be interested in this Hindu view of the matter. That church organization should altogether be dispensed with in the future development of Christianity in India may only be a counsel of perfection. But this should certainly serve as a serious warning to those who wish to propagate in India doctrines that apotheosise the church as the continuation of the Incarnation in a mechanical sense. All organization is a means to an end, and the church is no exception to this rule.

(5) The problem of Union should be treated as subsidiary to the problem of the *evolution of the Indian Church or Indian Christianity*, which is the main concern of Indian Christian thinkers. The Indian Church should not be treated as pliable material for conducting experiments for the solution of the denominational problems of Western Christendom. The financial dependence of the Indian Church may lend colour to this view propagated by interested ecclesiastics. But further thought on the matter should lead to a more serious view of the situation. Indian Christianity which has to establish itself as a religious force in the country cannot afford to take any step that will not carry her forward as an evangelistic agency. But it may be admitted that reconstruction of Indian Christianity itself demands attention to the problems of Western denominationalism. The Indian Church should try to benefit both by the experience of Western Christendom as well as by Indian religious heritage and try as far as possible to avoid the dangers of the past and gather up all that is

of value on a basis that will be acceptable to modern seekers after the truth.

(6) Another feature of Indian religion that may be pointed out is the recognition of the *secondary importance of the Sacraments in spiritual culture*. While there is almost an overwhelming recognition of the value of sacraments, Hinduism regards sacrament necessary only for the spiritually and intellectually immature devotees to be transcended on higher realization of spiritual realities. This is in accord with the teaching of Our Lord regarding worship in spirit and in truth which was going to replace temple worship and so get over the Jewish-Samaritan controversy over the correct location of the temple. Protestantism has evolved this simplicity through a series of reformatory efforts until we have the Quaker witness to absolute spiritual simplicity. This hard-won emphasis on spiritual values should not be overlooked in the pursuit or submerged in the consummation of Union.

## B. DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES

Having stated the above preliminary considerations that ought to weigh in considering future developments, we may now consider the possibilities before us.

(1) Will the present *Union Movement in South India lead to any practical result*? That is a legitimate question to ask, in spite of all the difficulties that beset it. We hold that the scheme offers no hope of uniting evangelicals and "catholics." No mere revision, but a radical alteration of basis alone will be of any use. But we have to take into account a welcome change that seems to be coming over the Church of England, since the last World Conference on Faith and Order in August, 1937 and the S. I. U. C. General Assembly of October, 1937. The "Outline of a Reunion scheme" between evangelicals and Anglicans in England, issued in February 1938 grants that, "it is a *rule of order* in the United Church that the celebration and administration of the Holy Communion should be entrusted to those who have received *authority thereto*." (Italics ours). In an explanatory note, the scheme then proceeds to refer to the different methods of authorisation followed in different denominations and to the practice of lay celebration in

several churches and concludes that, while authorisation is likely to continue as the most familiar practice, "there is need to reach fuller agreement about the universality of this rule and (2) fuller understanding of the views held with regard to its underlying principle". This task it leaves to be decided by the official representatives of the churches concerned. It is gratifying that the problem is definitely brought once more into the realm of discussion and we may cherish the hope that the Church of England will not fail to take up a position satisfactory to the evangelicals. But there is reference to the idea of rule of order in the 'informal' resolutions of the 'informal' part of the last Joint Committee, which took up the consideration of the Resolutions of the sixteenth S. I. U. C. Assembly held at Trivandrum without waiting for the matter to be formally referred to it by the Assembly, towards the end of 1939. If this informal resolution concerning the demand for lay celebration is to be interpreted as the Anglican view on the matter, once again the clouds gather and envelop the issue in darkness. Fortunately Bishop Waller in his recent article on "Necessary Elements in the United Church of South India" in the June Number of *Church Union News and Views* goes further. He writes in the following terms about the "Contribution of the Congregationalist":—

"As regards the meaning of the Church, I think that it is here that the Congregational system will make a very real contribution. It came into being in its present form as a claim of the members of the Church to receive their due place in the life of the body. And it is here, I think, that they have a real contribution to give the united Church. They make the assertion that the whole body of believers 'laymen' as well as 'ministers' are definitely responsible members of Christ's body—sharing equally the authority of the Church as a whole in all departments of its life and in all its activities. I feel that in our discussions we have lost sight of the real meaning of their historical protest and allowed ourselves to be led away into discussions of the functions of ministers. It is here, I think, that Congregationalism has something valuable to contribute. When the Church lost the idea of the responsibility of the 'lay' members for the life of the Church, when it allowed a lower standard for the 'secular' as opposed to the 'religious', it lost something which we must try to recover—the hallowing of all life. Our problem is how we are to reconcile the responsible calling of the minister with the complementary truth of the responsibility of every member of the Church. It is a matter



which requires more real thought than it has yet received. There may be many ways in which without losing sight of the fact that the ministers are called of God to teach and lead his people, their own responsibility may be brought home to the members of the Church and proper opportunities may be given to them to exercise it. I feel that the Congregationalists are by their very name pledged to teach us continually that the congregation, the Lord's people, are essentially the Church and that though functions are divided as they are in ordinary life, professions, manual labour, clerical labour and so on, the purpose of Christ is to bring all into one harmonious life in God.'

If this concession is made, the controversy over the doctrinal basis of the historical episcopate will be set at rest. But to make the resultant church Indian and modern in character, other questions regarding other doctrines and forms of organization will have to be faced, without fear or favour.

(2) *The immediate introduction of inter-communion with reference to Union* should be seriously considered as the next step in the Union Movement in order to give expression to the unity that exists already. This is a matter on which there has been really a set-back. As pointed out before, Anglicans and Lutheran ministers in the Tinnevely Diocese worked on equal terms in the early days. The Madras Tamil Christian Congress had common communion for many years. Recent union negotiations seem to have carried this question of inter-communion into the region of controversy, on the one hand, and to give it an importance that it did not formerly occupy in inter-denominational relationship. The matter has therefore reached an acute stage and has created fresh mis-understanding. In Student Movement circles as well as among the vast majority of laymen there is a good deal of restiveness, and unless this liberty of intercommunion is officially recognised, the matter is likely to be taken out of official hands and dealt with otherwise.

But it might be seriously suggested as an alternative that *the problem of intercommunion might with advantage be relegated to the secondary place which it occupied in former years and to which it really belongs*. The unity that exists is in God the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord, and in the Holy Spirit, i.e. in the spiritual realm, and it is unsafe to drag it down to the lower plane of the priest and the sacrament, which

has been the cause of much disunion in Christendom. This emphasis on the sacraments is likely to leave out of union movements highly advanced spiritual sections of the church like the Quakers. It is for those churches who exalt the value of the sacraments to see that they are not made a means of disunion and to make of the Table of the Lord the meeting place of all who love Him. Churches which cling on to these ideas do so at their own risk, and may not continue to command the respect of seekers after the truth or the loyalty of their own advanced members.

(3) *Federation* has been also proposed as a next step in the Union Movement, particularly by Dr. Stanley Jones, but has not received the attention that it deserves. Federation is a method of achieving union without doing violence to the bodies that enter it and will tend to create the spiritual unity that is of the greatest importance. The Church of England itself is a federation of dioceses which are regarded as the real units. The S.I.U.C. also is a federation of the Councils. The Lambeth Conference can well serve as a model for all federation organizations. The idea of federation is partially at work in the National Christian Council and the Provincial and Regional Councils associated with it. This movement might be strengthened and co-ordinated in a more effective manner. We may, however, refer to a tendency on the part of central bodies to arrogate or seek for coercive authority. We do not regard this as conducive to the welfare of the church or the growth of the Christian spirit, and this has to be guarded against. Moral suasion, and not coercion, should be recognised as the Christian method of bringing about religious achievements. In our opinion, the promotion of federation should be accompanied by the introduction of intercommunion and open communion, unless steps are taken to strengthen the view that sacraments have only a secondary place in spiritual culture.

(4) *An All-India Union of Evangelical Churches.* From the standpoint merely of union, this is a possibility that may be contemplated as a practical step. A movement along these lines had been in progress for some years. It will be remembered that when it began the South Indian negotiations, the S. I. U. C. had already taken part in the proposals for an

All-India Union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists which receded into the background accordingly. Neither of these proposals need prejudice the case for larger unions. There is an advantage in bringing together churches which have certain family likenesses. This will tend to remove the subdivisational denominations, and also conserve the heritages that deserve to be safeguarded. We leave it to those who may be so inclined to explore these possibilities.

(5) *The Future Indian Church.* We have previously indicated that we are not primarily interested in the promotion of a Union movement whose motive is the solution of the problem of western denominationalism. We also think that it is beyond human resources to achieve the union of all believers in one church. Protestant Christian history has demonstrated the value of religious diversity and brought into relief spiritual unity as the only comprehensive unity that is possible. We have expressed our suspicions about the spiritual results that will follow the formation of a single ecclesiastical organization. Principal Forsyth used to characterise the Union Movement as mass formation and the late Pope denounced it as *pan-Christianism*. We are unable to get enthusiastic over union movements that will only consist in ecclesiastical adjustments, but look forward to movements that will carry the Christian movement in India forward spiritually and intellectually. Our vision turns towards the conception of an Indian Church, which will embody the best elements from Western Christianity considered as a whole and also incorporate all that is best in India's religious heritage. To that end should be consecrated all the talents and energies of Indian Christian thinkers of this generation, awaiting God's guidance in that direction, whether in this generation, or later. An Indian Christianity is gathering momentum and will become a movement in due course. We shall therefore try to give expression to certain ideas that ought to serve as a basis for a modern Indian Church. These ideas were embodied in *An Evangelical Scheme of Union* placed before the sixteenth Session of the Bangalore Conference Continuation held at Trivandrum in June 21—26, 1933. It tries to make a contribution towards Church Union by affording scope for many of the practices of all the tolerant varieties of Protestantism while safeguarding evangelical

freedom and simplicity. But it was conceived primarily as a *reconstruction of Indian Christianity*. The scheme consists of two parts ; the first part deals with the fundamental principles of evangelical Christianity conceived also with an eye to Indian religious heritage. The second part applies these principles and makes an attempt to elaborate a simple constitution. The latter, therefore, is of secondary importance, and only certain sections of it, are reproduced. The Scheme has not yet been subjected to serious constructive criticism as the time has not been propitious. That it contains material deserving of attention may perhaps be inferred from the remarks of a critic of the scheme, who wrote: "That this alternative scheme has been carefully thought out is perfectly evident throughout in every paragraph."

The summary of religious beliefs of the Indian liberal evangelical Christian given below suffers under the disadvantage of being a first attempt in that direction. This is only put forward as an incentive to others more competent to set themselves to the task and evolve a satisfactory statement for the benefit of modern Indian Christian youths and other enquirers who may be looking for guidance in this respect.

## C. INDIAN LIBERAL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

### Part I

#### FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL LIBERAL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS

##### *I Faith*

The following articles of Faith may perhaps be required of every member of the Church :—

I believe in and acknowledge God, the Ultimate Power and Supreme Being, who ruleth and ordaineth all things with perfect love and wisdom.

I believe in, and accept as my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who has revealed God, the Father to mankind and accomplished salvation for all men who believe

in Him through His perfect life, His death, and His risen life.

I believe in and submit myself to the Holy Spirit who reveals and teaches all things that are spiritual unto men inwardly in their hearts, bringing about conviction of sin, repentance, salvation and sanctification, and guides His people into all truth and wisdom.

2. I worship God in and through the Person and Name of the Lord Jesus Christ through the spiritual succour and communion of the Holy Spirit, and acknowledge the Triune nature of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit of God.

[*Note*:—This statement of faith is intended to emphasise the value of saving faith in Christ and the practical experiential value of the Trinitarian formula. It may therefore give room to differing views prevalent among earnest Christians without giving offence to orthodoxy, as far as it is possible. It may perhaps be added that it is the summary of the Apostles Creed in the Church of England Catechism, intended to be repeated by every candidate for confirmation that led the writer to think of this simple statement].

3. I accept as my rule of life and conduct the two great commandments of the Lord:

(a) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength". Mark 12: 30, 31.

(b) "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is otherwise rendered by our Lord in the Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Matthew 7: 12.

& (c) The new commandment of the Lord regarding the fellowship of believers: "Love one another."

4. I accept the Holy Scriptures and especially the New Testament as containing all things necessary for salvation.

## *II. The Sacraments*

The sacraments are to be accepted as symbolic embodiments of religious truth intended as means of grace to those

who approach God thereby with the faith which is essential to salvation.

*Baptism* is a rite of initiation into the life that is in Christ, and hence of incorporation into the Church of Christ, administered to those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour.

*The Lord's Supper* is a perpetual commemoration of our Lord and in particular, His death, and is a sacrament of continual renewal of fellowship with Him and of the fellowship of all believers one with another in Him.

### III. *The Church*

The Church, as the Body of Christ, comprises all those who live in vital union with Him. Any group of such believers united to one another in Him may constitute an individual Church, which, however, is bound by the same kinship in Christ with other Churches and the Church Universal, of which it is both an independent expression and an incomplete part, being an inter-related member therein.

### IV. *Membership*

All those who live in vital union with God in Jesus Christ are members of the Body of Christ. Hence all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, acknowledge Him as their Lord and Saviour and are known to live in union with him are entitled to membership in the Church of Christ.

### V. *The Ministry*

While it is the inalienable privilege and inherent duty of every member of Christ's Body to bear testimony to spiritual blessings received, and render spiritual service for the edification of the brethren and for the benefit of those outside, the Church has at all times been blessed with individuals endowed with special gifts of leadership and service, and it is conducive to the welfare and well-being of the Church to give due recognition to such by granting them suitable status and opportunities for the exercise of their gifts. They may be set apart by a public act of consecration, the gifts being regarded as essential and a pre-requisite for, and not a result of, the latter.

## *VI. Government*

Since Christ is the Lord of the Church, it is His will and authority alone that should prevail therein, and it is the duty of the Church to seek and discover His will in the sacred presence vouchsafed to those who meet with a single heart in His name. There is no place in the Church for the rule of the majority or of a minority or of individuals over the rest, the will of God being secured through a unanimity that does not override conscience and gives due regard to differences of opinion. The individual conscience as well as autonomy of individual Churches are to be treated as sacred, moral suasion and not coercion, being the method of approach in all dealings between Christian individuals and Christian bodies.

## *VII. Organization*

The unity of the Church of Christ is a spiritual reality that is an article of faith for every Christian and is an ideal to be cherished and practised. It is, however, too sublime to find expression in a single organization, uniformity of order or worship or even of formulas of faith. The Church has, therefore, to be free to manifest itself in all its wealth and variety, responding to differing environments of the times, of the people and of inherent genius, so that it might reveal the manifold glory of God. Where unity of organization is not practicable, the unity ought to find expression in mutual recognition and intercourse and sense of solidarity. It is the duty and privilege of each church individually and denominationally to express both its peculiar character and its inherent catholicity.

## *VIII. Worship*

All congregational worship centres on the presence of the living Lord and the guidance of the Spirit: hence spiritual freedom and spontaneity is the first essential, and all things that tend to the edification of the faithful have a rightful place in worship, provided they are done "decently and in order."

## Part II

### CONSTITUTION

[Only the sections dealing with membership of individual churches, the sacraments and training for the Ministry and one clause from the section on ministry are reproduced].

#### *I. Membership*

There shall be three classes of membership :—

1. *Active membership* is open to those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour, and are known to live in vital union with Him and in unfeigned fellowship with the Brethren. It shall be the duty and privilege of active members to see to the welfare of the Church and its members and the conduct of its affairs and activities.

2. *Ordinary membership* is open to all who have confessed their faith in Jesus as adults through baptism or through solemn declaration or who have been admitted to the Lord's Table on such confession as adults.

3. *Associate membership* includes all those who profess and call themselves Christians, baptized or unbaptized, who have been placed under the care, training and discipline of the Church. Children may be admitted by means of a formal dedication service as soon as the parents may desire it, under the assurance of their being brought up in Christian teaching and example.

#### *II. Ministry*

[While the place of the ordinary paid Ministry as also all active members is recognised, special attention is drawn to ministers that may correspond to Indian gurus and sadhus in the following clauses]:

*Prophetic Ministry:* The churches shall always be ready to welcome men of outstanding and mature piety and use them for the deepening of the spiritual life of the churches and in evangelistic work.



The Church council or other central bodies may, whenever available, secure men of unimpeachable character, of outstanding and mature piety, and of learning and experience, already engaged in unselfish religious ministration, and charge them with the spiritual care of a district or a number of districts and make them available for the deepening and keeping up the tone of the religious life of the churches. There need be no permanency attached to such a provision.

They may be maintained through freewill offerings or supported by themselves. While they should be kept from want, they should not belong to the class of paid official ministers.

They may be treated with all the dignity and honor that is due to their intrinsic worth, and it may be competent for them to attend and advise any church or committee or council, but they shall not exercise any voting power.

These unofficial "prophetic" ministers may be celibate sadhus, but in all cases, shall be men with the self-sacrifice and devotion expected of such.

#### IV. *The Sacraments*

*The Sacrament of Baptism*, being a symbol of regeneration, shall be administered to those who profess and are known to have believed in the Lord unto salvation. It shall be administered usually by those who have been consecrated and recognised as ministers. When any deviation is made from this rule, as on all occasions, the sacrament shall be administered with all solemnity and reverence only by those spiritually fit for it.

*The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* may be administered to all ordinary and active members and to all those who love the Lord in sincerity. It is to be treated as a symbol of communion of each believer with the Lord and the unity of all believers one with another. While it is necessary to warn unworthy participants, no one may be debarred from it, participation in it being treated as a solemn and sacred matter between the believer and the Lord.

*The Table of the Lord* shall, as a rule, be presided over by a duly consecrated minister and the distribution may be

done by ministers, elders and other active members. When any deviation is made, as on all occasions, the sacrament shall be celebrated with all devotion and reverence, and there may be a special prayer of blessing on the celebrant to set him apart for the purpose on that particular occasion.

*The Elements of the Lord's Supper* may be altered to suit Indian conditions and sentiments by the substitution at least of wine by water or any other suitable drink.

## V. TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

Training for the ministry shall be undertaken by independent institutions, without any official relationship to ecclesiastical bodies. They should be conducted by men of outstanding piety and learning, who could be looked up to as the custodians, indirectly, of the spiritual life of the churches. They shall be considered responsible for the maintenance of a high standard of piety and learning of those who pass through their training and are declared by them to be qualified for religious service.

It shall, however, be the duty also of those who call them to the ministry in the churches to satisfy themselves as to their fitness.

The churches should look forward to the time when ministerial training shall be undertaken by Brotherhoods and Ashrams, with high ideals of self-sacrifice, piety and service.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE SOUTH INDIA RAPPROCHEMENT

By V. CHAKKARAI

Some good friend, obviously of Pasumalai, one of the foci of the Church Union scheme, has been pleased to forward to me the Rev. Charles Clayton Morrison's article under the above caption in *Christendom*. The able writer says that it was written in response to a request for an expression of opinion "on the proposals of the S.I.U.C., adopted last October (1937)". Those who have republished it believe that it "will be of immense value to those who are concerned and interested in the South India scheme". I want to examine Dr. Morrison's theory of the Church as well as his criticisms of the proposals of the General Assembly for inter-communion and inter-celebration before union.

With the views on the Church put forward, I am familiar, though not friendly. They are those of certain Anglican theologians who would support the Roman Catholic ecclesiasticism minus the head, the Pope and infallibility. The Roman Catholic doctrine has at least the great merit of logic and consistency but this is a truncated system. What is this view of the Church? The Church is the Body of Christ; the Church is the community—the creation of God; it is not a voluntary association of men who hold certain common views and adopt certain rites; the Church is "the bearer of salvation"; in the Church is "the revelation of God not the revelation of a doctrine about God, but of God Himself; Christianity is not a doctrine, not a way of life, not a personal religious experience: Christianity is a specific and concrete community. This Church is the carrier of his grace". Here is a sparkling gem that I believe Bishop Gore or some one of that school discovered in the diamond mines of patristic literature. "As God was in Christ so he was (is now) in the Church—the Church was the extension and effectuation of the incarnation. Moreover, to affirm that God was 'in Christ' was to affirm that God was in the Body of Christ, which is the Church." Paul declared the wonderful evangel "God was in Christ reconciling the world into himself." Dr. Morri-

son proceeds : "Manifestly this statement of the Apostle could not have referred to the limited person of the historical Jesus, but to the community of the faith of which Christ was the Head. It was not Jesus as a detached individual who reconciled the world to God; it was what God did through him. And what did God do through him? He created a community in his company.....To be a true member of the Church was to be 'in Christ'. To be in Christ was to be a member of the Church. The concepts are absolutely interchangeable." Again, "the creeds did not create the church. The church created them." Such are some of the statements that Dr. Morrison thinks will help Indian Christians not only to solve the knotty questions of Church Union, but to know the Lord and be known of him.

I think it was Josiah Royce of America who in *The Problem of Christianity* did away with the historical Jesus and the risen Lord and made loyalty to the community the real thing in Christianity. His theory was the *Church minus Jesus Christ*. Dr. Morrison's is a subtle variant of the same, *No Christ without the Church*. In both cases, the church is exalted—the creature over the creator. Some modernists have a charming theory that somehow the Church created Christ out of nothing, or almost the same thing, out of a historical figure called Jesus who was by no means a remarkable person. In discussing the creeds that are the creations of the Church, Dr. Morrison is careful to say that they are intellectual formulations of the experience of the Church, experience whose origin is the Lord. But the two, the Lord's grace and man's ideology, according to him, may be distinguished but cannot be divorced. That is, man's philosophy is indispensable to God's grace and truth. The vast subjective fallacy of this, I shall not pause to point out at length, but leave it with my emphatic protest.

It is curious how European philosophy has affected Christian concepts. The idea that the Church is an extension of the incarnation is simply Hegelianism transferred to the Church. The Absolute incarnates in man's reason, and this reason attains its highest in the State; ergo, the State is super-human, and Herr Hitler is the superman, or demi-god. The Lord himself is incarnated in the State fully; no, but He is incarnated or re-incarnated in the Church. This is quite flattering to the State, Herr Hitler, the Church, and churchmen. But it seems to be

mere communal egoism, in the garb of the Lord's seamless robe that the Roman soldiers stole. It is the creation of an ecclesiastical personality that is a mere hallucination, that history repudiates and good sense rejects. I shall say here a few words why this whole baseless fabric has no attraction for me nor any meaning.

(1) To the Indian, be he a Hindu, Christian or Mussalman, God is the supreme or only reality. Nothing else is co-ordinate with him, or indispensable to His perfection or plenitude. Dr. Morrison's theory of the Church does violence to this fundamental—the Indian view of God.

(2) The Church in history (especially of Western Christendom) is not an extension of the incarnation. Probably, the Indian would regard this as blasphemy. The fact that individuals in the Church or Churches either singly or in groups, have been saved and directed by the Lord, cannot make them an extension of the incarnation. The history of the Church, its past melancholy and marred record at which the Western sceptic Gibbon levelled his polished irony and its present impotence in face of the world wickedness and fraud of its rulers, are an extension of the Holy One's incarnation! God forbid.

(3) In India we are not prepared to identify Christianity with the Church, or rather to identify the Church with Christ. The separation has been made in the Indian consciousness. It knows Him apart from the Church, Western or Eastern and apart from civilisation, in which the Church lives, breathes and has its being. The Western Church or churches (why should Dr. Morrison speak of the church? There is no such thing as the church, except as a metaphor) I do not condemn. They have been the nurseries of great *bhaktas* and great movements. But to equate the Church with the Blessed One—that is beyond my capacity.

(4) To say that the Church is the carrier of salvation, what does it mean? If it means that it preaches the Word, or rather ought to preach it, it is no doubt true; though the church cannot claim that its preaching of the Word is God's Word. Dr. Morrison knows that Karl Barth will hotly reject his theory as the Babel Tower, or *Titanism*. But if it means that in some sense the church saves or rather the Lord can only save through the Church, I refuse to accept such a pretentious creed.

The Lord saves and has saved apart from the churches, so far as human wisdom can discern. Such a boast is dangerous because of its obvious tendency to inflate churchmen and inspire them with a narrowness that will squeeze out its true Christian attitude. In India we must evolve a conception of the Church that it is also the church of Esau before it can be the church of Jacob.

(5) The churches cannot lay the flattering unction to their souls that the Lord will always be with them or in them, irrespective of their conformity to His will. The old church of Israel thought that Jerusalem would be inviolate and Jehovah would not desert it. But the prophet Ezekiel told them in crushing language that it was false security. The splendor of the Lord departed. Not seldom the same happened with the church or churches. The Lord left their house desolate, though a remnant did not bow the knees to Baal. The church or churches have no claim for independence; some or all of them the Lord can and may cause to disappear, as has often happened in the past. These are earthen vessels that may be broken, when their use has been fulfilled or their abuse has frustrated their purpose.

(6) The conception of St. Paul—that churches are the Body of Christ—has been done to death in the hands of ecclesiastical lawyers. A metaphor has been metamorphosed into a juristic institution, so that we can no longer recognise in its modern meaning or, medieval the lofty ideal of the original author. The Roman Church, pressing the figure of speech to its furthest extent, not only makes the church the extension of the incarnation, but makes its earthly head the real head of the church, for without a visible head the visible church is a trunk without a head. The analogy is complete. All that St. Paul, borrowing the figure probably from Stoicism meant was that Christians should carry out the will of the Lord.

(7) Our Lord never made use of this figure of the Church being His Body. This figure could not have emanated from Him; for there was a more congenial one, consecrated by the usage of the prophets, viz., that He is the vine and Christians are branches; and according to the Fourth Evangelist, He made use of this to enforce the lesson of abiding in Him with the dreadful possibility of the contrary followed by destruction. My contention is that Western theology and ecclesiasti-

cism have changed the flexibility and freedom of Biblical figures into the rigidity of dogmatic moulds. The function of the more poetic mind of the East is to soften the angularities and lubricate the joints made stiff by exclusive pretensions. This is not the place where I can elaborate what the Indian view of the church will be, even if it be possible to do so without running the risk of turning out a false prophet (By the way, Paul's figure of the olive tree in Romans is more appropriate).

(8) With regard to the creeds, Dr. Morrison wants that they should be regarded *as ancient witnesses* of some truths. So far as the creeds are concerned, Indian Christians, even the majority (90 or 95 per cent and even more) are not troubled about the creeds being witnesses, ancient or modern. In the S.I.U.C. and even in the so called Anglican churches, even the pastors have not the dimmest idea of the controversies that led to the Nicene formula. Nor to the debased ideology of neo-platonism that underlies its phraseology. Indian theology is yet to be realised. Those who are acquainted with the theology of the Nicene creed have no need for it; and it is an antiquated one that can be of no value, apart from its being a relic of ancient paganism. My complaint is not about its theological inadequacy and falsity but its failure to bring to men's minds the mind and will and grace of the Lord and His Kingdom which is not the church.

Now something more has to be said about inter-celebration and inter-communion which the S.I.U.C. would demand before a further move can be made in the direction of Church Unity. I shall state my position as follows :—

(1) Dr. Morrison has evidently no conception of the Indian Christian situation. Otherwise, he would not have misread it so completely.

(2) The South Indian scheme had no Indian origin. It was based on the Lambeth Quadrilateral: hence all the many twistings and contortions and distortions of the last twenty years are sought to be fitted into the Procrustean bed of the Lambeth Quadrilateral. The Indian mind has contributed nothing to it but opposition. If I may say so, the presence of Anglican Bishops and Western missionaries on the Joint-Committee has deflected the Indian mind into channels that are not its own.



(3) The Mission field is not a fit scene where to fight out the battle of Western ecclesiasticism. They ought to be transferred to Rome, Canterbury or Geneva which is their native habitat. Strange that they should try to impose a Western solution of Western controversies on the Eastern mind. It is our tragedy, that such experiments should be made on our quivering flesh!

(4) These sectarianisms mean little or nothing to us. And if Western missionaries were to disappear miraculously from India, after twenty years not a vestige of these will survive to tell the tale of the tiresome negotiations of the unionists. They are accentuating them among Indian Christians to emphasise the importance of removing them by the Quadrilateral.

(5) So far as I am concerned, I have never felt the slightest desire to inter-commune with members of the Anglican or other churches. I do not see any such tremendous power and holiness in them that this Holy Communion should inspire me. Why then does the S. I. U. C. insist upon inter-communion and inter-celebration? It is, I believe, the desire to show that unity exists among Indian Christians, and it should be recognised outwardly in this manner. The scheme is only the ring, but not of the essence of the union. If Christian love does not exist, then the Lambeth Quadrilateral cannot evoke it. That is the case in the West: the Roman Catholic unity of church polity and loyalty has not yet made the German Catholics and French Catholics love one another in the Lord. That their so-called unity can alter the essence of human relations, is a mere delusion and a snare.

(6) Dr. Morrison speaks of the unfairness of demanding them before union. The negotiating bodies, at least, their officials, are now bargaining and have been doing so, like parents of a bride and a bridegroom, for the biggest amounts of cash dowry. I may be accused of want of charity if I say that these negotiations have also had a very melancholy aspect to me. And if Dr. Morrison calls the new proposals earnest money, he is welcome to do so. If inter-communion and inter-celebration can only have a place when unity exists, then two alternative inferences can be drawn. Either we believe that unity exists (that is my position), then inter-communion and inter-celebration are mere matters of courtesy.

If unity does not exist, it must be sought in the higher sphere of the Lord's mind in which case inter-communion and inter-celebration may be tokens that parties stand on an equal footing and are ready to venture on the voyage of faith.

I regret that so much time, talents and even finance should be squandered on this scheme. If it is effected, it will not be followed by Indians rushing to enter the united church with its bishops, mitres and apostolic origin from the fisherman of Galilee. In India our Saivaite *Matathipathis* trace their apostolic descent from Mount *Kailash*, from *Nandi*; and the Western analogue will not startle Indians into awe and admiration. If it is not effected, nothing of great consequence is lost. India will find a solution, if such be necessary. Why art thou troubled and disquieted in vain, O my soul? Hope thou in God, for He is the health of thy countenance and joy.



## *Section VI*

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### CHAPTER XII

#### **THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN RELATION TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL SITUATION**

BY

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### CHAPTER XIII

#### **INDIAN CHRISTIANS UNDER SWARAJ**

BY

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## CHAPTER XII

# THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN RELATION TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL SITUATION

BY DR. EDDY ASIRVATHAM

The questions which we set out to answer are :—

- (1) Why have Indian Christians been slow in throwing themselves into the national movement?
- (2) What are the policies of missions and churches which are a hindrance to the development of the national spirit?
- (3) How can Christianity save the soul of the Indian nation?

### I

#### INDIFFERENCE OF INDIAN CHRISTIANS TO POLITICS

At the very outset, it must be said that Christianity and nationalism are not opposed to each other. If by Christianity we mean the selfish saving of individual souls for some future existence, it is obvious that there can be nothing in common between Christianity and nationalism. Likewise, if by nationalism is meant the glorification of one's own nation and the exploitation of others, then too it is clear that Christianity can have nothing to do with it.

Christianity, as we understand it, means both *individual* and *social* salvation. A Christian who says that he is a saved man, but looks with unconcern upon an unsaved environment, is not truly saved. Our aim should be to save the whole environment around us, and the nation is certainly an essential part of that environment. Christianity has no right to its claims to be unique if it cannot touch and transform every aspect of human life.

Many an Indian Christian is afraid of anything savouring of nationalism, because he has not been properly informed of its meaning. It is true that in the name of nationalism every imaginable sin has been committed. At the present moment

a raging, tearing kind of nationalism is occupying the foreground in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Militarist Japan. It is this type of nationalism which Tagore decries when he describes it as "the organized self-interest of a whole people." History has known of instances where a group of people, soon after becoming a nation, proceeded to oppress their neighbours and launched upon colonisation and imperial adventures.

But the only kind of nationalism which we as Christians can support is a nationalism which puts into practice the motto "live and help others to live." It is what may be described as a "sheep-flock nationalism," in contrast with the "wolf-pack nationalism" mentioned earlier. From the point of view of a Christian, nationalism is simply another name for national self-respect. If Christianity emphasises the personality of the individual, as it does, it is bound to emphasise the personality of the group also. A man is not worth his salt if he does not take legitimate pride in the past accomplishments of his country, and does not look forward with buoyant hope to what his country may still accomplish in the future. Nationalism means the right of a people to be themselves; a right to a place in the sun.

Nationalism has a political, an economic and a cultural meaning; and it is largely with the first of these meanings that we concern ourselves here.

Even to-day there are many Christians who believe that politics is of the devil, and that the Christian should keep out of it altogether. Quite recently a Western missionary, belonging to one of the less known denominations in South India, published a booklet in the vernacular on "The Christian and Politics" in which he asserts that it is a sin to mix with the people of the world in politics. He condemns all participation in politics and contends that a Christian should not even contest a seat for a village panchayat court or a Bench Magistrate's. Even recording one's vote, according to this purist, is a sin. In support of this peculiar theory, the author quotes profusely from the Bible, verses which seem to fit his case. As often happens in such cases, the verses are torn out of their context and are made to do service in a situation, of which the authors of the different parts of the Bible could never have dreamt.

Although views of this kind are absurd on their very face, it is surprising to find the number of Christians—even among the educated and enlightened—who are ready to swallow them. Politics, they are convinced, belong to this world, corrupting those who take part in it. It is interesting to note that while such views are held on politics, they are not held in regard to business in general. If politics corrupts a man, so does business. If that be so, ought not the Christian to avoid business altogether and take to eating grass? People need to be taught that participation in politics or business *as such* does not corrupt a man. While the Christian is in the world, he is not of it. It is his duty to transform politics, business, and international relations into the image of Christ. It is possible to overdo the attitude that Christians are mere sojourners in this world, and that their Kingdom belongs to another sphere of existence. Christ never taught a purely “other-worldly” faith. While he believed that the Kingdom of God would be brought in by the sudden intervention of God, he at the same time held that it was a living reality, in the realisation of which every believer had an important part to play.

While some Christians, on abstract grounds, may be convinced of the rightness of the Christian taking his proper share in politics, they are afraid of national politics and especially of Indian national politics. Their view seems to be that if politics is of the devil, national politics is of the arch devil. Among this company, we find people with a wide range of half-digested opinions. Some would say that political subordination and even persecution are a part of the Christian's lot in life. And inasmuch as “the powers that be are ordained of God”, the Christian should quietly submit to them. Even when the rulers openly pursue an unjust and unrighteous policy, we should regard their actions as a part of God's inscrutable plan.

Fear of participation in national politics becomes an obsession with some Christians when they realise that such participation may lead to a clash with the British Empire and the British Government in India. For generations they have been taught by Christian missionaries and their apt Indian subordinates that the Empire is of God. To some it is in accordance with the prophecies contained in the Bible, say in the book of Daniel or the Book of Revelation. There



fore, to resist the British Empire is tantamount to resisting God Himself. Others who may not have such implicit faith in the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, look to the practical advantages accruing from membership in the British Empire. They trot out the well-known arguments: that the British Empire has saved us from the anarchy and corruption following the downfall of the Moghul Empire, that it has given us a stable government and a reasonable brand of justice, and that it has provided the country with a network of railways, telegraphs, post offices, roads, canals, etc. On these grounds they argue that it is sheer ingratitude to criticise the British Government or do anything which may directly or indirectly weaken its hold upon India.

Some of these Indian Christian apologists contend that the British Government is a Christian Government and that, as Christians, we are its natural allies. Our primary allegiance, they say, is not to the country which gave us birth but to the religious community to which we belong. They further argue that if we encourage anything like nationalism or Swaraj, Christianity in India is bound to the thrown overboard. Nationalism to them means the assertion of Hindu domination and the re-establishment of caste, idolatry and superstition. Mahatma Gandhi is to them a clever politician who is doing all that he can to undermine the influence of Christianity.

Indian Christians as described above, who use religious and pseudo-religious arguments in support of their particular points of view, are few when compared with a large host of secular-minded Christians who urge material considerations in defeating nationalism. Many of the latter are rank communalists. A few years ago when Swaraj was still a dream, and the spoils of office were not as many as at present, Indian Christian leaders stood boldly for Nationalism as against Communalism. But in recent years communalism has been spreading fast among Indian Christians. They argue that since Indian Christians are a small minority, less than 2 p. c. of the population, the part of wisdom is to join hands with other minorities in getting whatever they can for themselves. A good many of them are prepared to place communal advantage and communal good above national advantage and national good. Some of them say that joint electorates and nationalism are good in their own way, but as practical-minded people they

should plump for communal electorates and communal representation in the services. They hold up the Muslim League and the Anglo-Indian community for emulation. They argue that the Muslims in particular have been able to get all that they are entitled to, and even more, by solidly standing for their communal rights. These Indian Christian communalists are filled with fear and suspicion of the majority community. To them Swaraj means undisguised Hindu rule ; and Hindu rule means rule by the upper castes, to the exclusion of Indian Christians and other such minorities. Some of these communalists point with genuine satisfaction to the amount of good their communalistic policy has wrought by way of procuring money from the Government for schools, scholarships, and wells, and in the direction of securing representation for Indian Christians on bench courts and municipal and district boards.

Others among Indian Christians descend to rank personal selfishness in support of their anti-national sentiments and attitudes. One has known of Indian Christians with liberal ideas on national and political questions refusing to put their ideals into practice because of the fear that such a course of action will land them in trouble. Some of them even sacrifice their self-respect and pretend to be other than what they are so as to secure government scholarships for their children and titles and honours for themselves.

Another argument which weighs with some Indian Christians is that if Swaraj should come about, the so-called Indian Christian culture might be wiped out altogether. One occasionally hears such doubts as these : If we encourage nationalism what is to happen to our non-Indian names, non-Indian music and forms of worship, non-Indian church organisations and non-Indian modes of living ? Sheer inertia prevents many an Indian Christian from changing over to a state of affairs which he knows is distinctly better. An issue which has roused much heated controversy recently in South India is the place of sacramental wine in the Communion Service in districts where the Congress government has enacted prohibition. It is painful to find large numbers of Indian Christians to whom religious faith consists in the faithful performance of certain forms and ceremonies. One fails to see how Christian fellowship can be destroyed by substituting grape-juice or even water for fermented wine. Jesus Christ commanded many things more weighty than the taking of the symbolic cup and yet Chris-

tians have no scruples in ignoring them altogether. They "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

Because of the innate selfishness of Indian Christians in general, only a handful of them have thrown themselves heart and soul into the national cause. In this respect they are not much worse than other communities in India. Selfishness is one of our besetting sins. Indian Christian apologists at times say that their community is economically very poor and that, therefore, it is suicidal to throw away one's opportunities for making money in order to take up national service or go to jail for the sake of one's convictions. Hindus, on the other hand, it is argued, can afford to throw up their jobs and even march into the jail because of the insurance they have in the form of the joint family system.

## II

### RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND CHURCHES FOR THE INDIFFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS TO POLITICS

If these are the reasons why Indian Christians have not contributed their share to the national development of the country, the next question to answer is, to what extent are missions and churches responsible for the existence of these conditions and how far can they remove them?

It is true that Christian Missions as a whole have fought shy of national questions till recently. Even today they are willing to give a sympathetic hearing to questions of indigenous church organisation, indigenous forms of worship and music, and indigenous leadership. But when it comes to Indian patriotism, more often than not, they draw the line. The prevailing point of view among them is that the British Government has on the whole been a good government and that, whatever its faults may have been in the past, it deserves our sympathy in the earnest efforts it is making at present to confer self-government upon the people of India. Therefore, they set their faces wholly against any form of political agitation. They easily forget that no foreign government ever rules a subordinate people out of a purely altruistic motive. It is too late in the day to try to hoodwink people by the use of such lofty phrases as the "white man's burden," "sacred trust" and "mission of civilisation." To one ruler who may have been swayed by altruistic

motives, there must have been ten at least swayed by egoistic motives. Missionary apologists often forget that no foreign government parts with its authority for purely altruistic and humanitarian reasons. It is no exaggeration to say that what little self-government there may be in the country today is due largely to the sufferings and privation of selfless nationalist leaders, and those among the masses who followed their leadership. Neither Indian Christians nor foreign missionaries have had a definite and direct share in bringing about even partial self-government in India. Indian Christians have been busy feathering their own nests, while missionary leaders have frequently taught and preached a gospel divorced from its social and political implications.

The time has come for Christian missions and churches to realise once for all that it is no sin for a man to have a whole-some love for his country and adopt every legitimate method possible to free his country from foreign yoke. Instead of discouraging such nationalist attitudes, missions and churches should encourage them. What is the use of incessantly preaching about God's love, justice, and brotherhood if they cannot be related to the social, economic, and political life around us? No one wants any mission or church to do propaganda work for any political party. But it is their duty to show how methods, policies, and principles in politics can and should be related to the truths of Christianity.

Great harm is done to Christianity and to the progress of Christian cause in this country by certain queer denominations and individual missionaries (such as the purist mentioned earlier) who implore us to flee from political life altogether as though it was of the devil. Equal harm is done to the Christian cause by imperial-minded missionaries and Christian workers who use every opportunity possible to line themselves with "the powers that be." In justifying their inaction, which amounts to callousness at times of political tension, American missionaries take shelter behind the Gibraltar rock of neutrality pledge; and some of us know what this means. It is occasionally argued by these missionaries that they are in India as the guests of the British Government: What a travesty of truth! It is conveniently forgotten that both the British Government and foreign missionaries are the guests of the people of this land and neither group has a right to violate the unwritten laws of hospitality.

Christian missions and churches persuade their adherents to sacrifice themselves for the church, the mission, or Christian work at large. Seldom is it that they implore them to make a similar sacrifice on behalf of the country or the nation. Why should missionaries consider what is a virtue in their own country is a vice East of the Suez? Does not every self-respecting man throb with an earnest desire to give his country a place of dignity and equality in a family of self-respecting and self-governing nations?

The ultra-conservative policy of Christian Missions and churches has driven away from their fold the few patriotic Indian Christian youths they have possessed. One knows of a small band of earnest Indian Christian men and women who are burning themselves out in the service of their country. While standing firm as regards their Christian principles and convictions, they have reacted violently against missions and churches. They consider these organisations nothing more than "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," between whose lofty professions and actual practice there is a world of difference. They do not consider missions and churches worthy of the sacrifice which they gladly make on behalf of the country. A question for us to ask is, Is it or is it not true that missions and churches have often compromised with evil in the name of expediency?

There are several more among Indian Christians, apart from the bold ones mentioned above, who would want to be nationalists but are afraid to try the experiment. They sit on the fence eating their hearts away. They occasionally give moral and financial support to national causes, but are afraid to let themselves go. Have Christian churches and missions done anything for them?

Missionaries and Christian workers often say that their business is not politics. Their business is to make available to every believer an abundant source from which he can get the necessary power and inspiration to transform life as a whole. Nobody will deny that this is a laudable Christian ideal. But how far has it worked in actual practice?

Christian missions and churches place much stress upon the training of character and the infusing of a passion for service. But what are the facts? One doubtless knows of some

Indian Christians who are doing honour to the Cause of Christ by their unimpeachable character. People of this kind are sought after by non-Christians. But what shall we say of the bulk of our people? Can we honestly say that the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian as regards character and keen desire for service is so apparent that the man in the street can see the difference for himself, what kind of Christian young men and women our Christian educational institutions and other organisations are turning out? Are they not colourless, anaemic, insipid personalities who do not do any good and are incapable of doing anything bad? Are we turning out vigorous, living, forceful personalities who leave their Christian impress upon everything that they touch? Has Christianity soaked beneath their skins or is it only a thin paint which comes off even with the slightest drizzle?

The impression which one at times forms of the Indian Christian student when compared with other students is that he dresses better, behaves better, shows more of good breeding and gentlemanliness, works fairly hard, but not too hard, pays special attention to the crease on his trousers and the shine on his shoes, is decidedly more denationalised, is practically ignorant of the rich heritage of India, and lacks somewhat in those passive virtues which are characteristically Indian.

As regards service, in such matters as flood relief, conducting night schools, helping at melas, distributing medicine to villagers and cleaning the streets, non-Christians have played a more leading part than Christians. All this makes one wonder whether we are justified in our claim that we are training better men and women and are infusing in them a passion for service.

To argue in this manner is not to deny that Christian missions and Churches have brought about a revolutionary change in the life and outlook of the common people who have turned to Christianity. Our point is that after a certain level is reached, Christian missions and churches hitherto have been unable to bring about the same degree of radical change. Yet holding this point of view we have no hesitation in endorsing every word of the Bishop of Dornakal when he describes the marvellous changes wrought by Christianity in the lives of mass movement converts. Christianity has raised them social-

ly. It has given them education. It has raised their womanhood. It has enabled them to get rid of infant marriage, purdah and drink. Their home life is much purer than it was before conversion. Monogamy is replacing loose marriage relations. Old superstitions and degrading conditions and habits are being given up. They are much cleaner than before. It had given them self-respect, fellowship, and brotherhood. Above all it has given them redemption and the possibility of a new life. These results, we are convinced, more than justify the rising tide of evangelism.

But all this is a digression in relation to the question with which we are immediately concerned. Are Christian missions and churches bending every nerve possible to rouse in people a wholesome desire for the national uplift of India and in directing that desire along channels of fruitfulness?

Missionaries and Christian workers have not yet entered into the ideology of modern India, and tried to see what connection they can establish between it and Christian truths. Indian ideology to-day stresses freedom as the birthright of every individual and of every group. It is a pity that just at a time like this, even missionaries, possibly under the pervasive influence of totalitarianism, should at times minimise the importance of freedom and of democracy. In doing that they forget that they are untrue to the very essence of the religion which they profess and teach. Free development of the human spirit is at the very centre of Christianity.

Mahatma Gandhi has been crying from the house tops calling the attention of the world to the necessity of establishing non-violence and truth as the foundation of the whole life. Yet how many Christians have sought to analyse these principles and relate them to life conditions? One occasionally hears of non-violent resistance referred to in sneering terms by those who still believe in such shibboleths as "war to end war" and war as a "cruel necessity". If non-violence and truth are fundamentally Christian principles, as we believe they are, it is our duty to study all their implications and make them function in our corporate life.

Socialism is fast becoming "man's other religion" in the country. Youth, even Christian youth, is impatient with our lofty professions which produce no practical results. In the

face of poverty, unemployment and distress, youth wants to know what religion, and, in particular, the Christian religion, is doing to relieve the situation. A mass movement, is taking place among the peasants and labouring classes of India. They are learning to organise themselves as never before and are using their collective strength in securing for themselves the minimum conditions of a decent existence. Have Christian missions and churches realised what is likely to happen to their creeds and rituals, churches and organisations if they continue to turn their backs upon the rising tide of peasant and labour movements? People with short memories may have forgotten the story of Russian Bolshevism.

The present Indian situation is calling our immediate attention to the need for national unity. Enlightened leaders all over the country see the desperate need there is for national unity. But how many of our Christian leaders, missionary and Indian, have realised it? Even if many have realised it, what are they doing to promote it actively? Are they using religion as a unifying factor, or as a divisive force?

A great many of our missionaries' and Christian workers are total strangers to the ideology of the country. This is because they have come to view their work as connected with the masses, almost to the exclusion of the "intellectuals." The "intellectuals" are becoming one of the outcastes of India so far as the missionary is concerned. The missionary quite often says to himself that there is no use bothering oneself with those who are brooding over the problems of the country, evolving new ideas and adapting old ideas to new situations. He wants concrete results and, for this purpose, he turns to the mass movement converts, or the docile Christians who are willing to follow his leadership without question. The longings and aspirations of the thoughtful are not seldom a closed book to him.

This aloofness from the intellectuals is partly responsible also for the indifference of the average missionary and Christian worker to the question of the renaissance of Indian culture. Indian art, music, drama and architecture have not yet been brought into the service of Christ.

### III. HOW CAN CHRISTIANITY SAVE THE SOUL OF INDIA?

The third and last question to which we address ourselves is, how can Christianity save the *soul of India*? This ques-



tion in itself is significant because it realises that India has a soul to be saved, and that Christianity can save it. For too long a time Christian missions and churches have acted as though their only concern was the saving of individual souls for some future existence. It is time that they realised that India as a whole has a soul, and that this soul can never be fully saved under foreign yoke. If the highest good, which an individual or a nation can have is a self-earned good it follows that political nationalism in the case of India is not a luxury, but a matter of life and death. It is only when the soul of India is free that she can make her greatest contribution to the sum total of world's culture and civilisation. It is only then that Indian Christianity can come into its own and become truly Indian and truly Christian.

Among the ways in which Christianity can save the soul of India, a place of importance should be given to the propagation of the Christian ideas of God, man, and society. The Christian believes God to be a loving Father keenly interested in the world which He has created. Man is a fellow-worker with Him in the establishment of a kingdom of justice and righteousness, of joy and peace. The Christian further believes that if God is the Father of us all, all men are equally his children. This being so, the Christian has no hesitation in denouncing distinctions of caste, creed, and colour, race, rank, and religion. The brotherhood of a Hindu is often confined to the limits of his caste or group. The Muslim confines it to his fellow-religionists. If Indian Christians can once and for ever get rid of all distinctions of caste among themselves and live and work together as a single unit, that will be a striking object lesson to the rest of India. They will be serving the soul of India.

The proper presentation of Christ and his message and the conveying of his spirit to men or other ways of saving the soul of India. There is no greater solvent to the problems of the world at large than the person, message, and spirit of Jesus Christ. But Christian people and, even more, Christian organisations, have been afraid to experiment with Christianity. Christianity has not been fully tried in all the departments of life. Too often even devout Christians have been afraid to experiment with it. But for this fear, baser forms of imperialism, war, economic injustice, and racial persecution would have been abolished long ago. It is folly to present Chris-

tianity only as a matter of individual salvation or even only in terms of character. We want Christianity in action. We do not want Christianity as a creed, as an exclusive mystical experience, or as a type of civilisation. Neither do we want any particular denomination claiming that it is *the church*. We want Christianity as a living force in the life of the individual, and the nation.

Earlier in the paper, we expressed a doubt as to whether Christianity so far has effected a radical change in the character of its followers. But this doubt does not deter us from holding the firm conviction that Christianity alone is capable of producing the highest type of character. In the realm of passive virtues, India stands head and shoulders above other countries, *i.e.*, as regards such virtues as meekness, humility, capacity for friendship and suffering, devotion, and hospitality. But in the realm of active or rugged virtues however, India is deficient. A contemporary observer claims that the three striking defects of the Indian people are lack of self-discipline, timidity, and self-interest. Many a Western observer has remarked that while India is strong on the side of mind and emotions, it is not equally strong as regards will-power. Some months ago Lord Baden Powell was quoted to have said that the three main defects of India were lack of health, lack of unity, and lack of character.

Our 'yes' is not always 'yes' and our 'no' is not always 'no'. It may be both 'yes' and 'no'. There is a lack of clear-cut decision, a lack of will power, and a lack of moral drive. In India there is undoubtedly a passion for philosophical or abstract truth. But what is needed most today is truth in action, truth in relation to the situations of life. We need also business honesty, straightforwardness, personal courage, manliness, and a spirit of co-operation. Exhorting the graduates of the Andhra University at a recent convocation, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, the Premier of the Madras Presidency, said: "We should develop patriotic service and incorruptible honesty..... We should practise and develop a horror of dishonesty and corruption."

Christianity, we believe, can supplement the passive virtues we already possess by the eager desire and will to possess active virtues. It presents to India the challenge of a Christ-like character. Through the Christian home, pulpit, and

educational institutions, some changes have already been wrought. But we need a more apparent change. Among other things, Christianity has helped people to overcome the traditional attitude of servility and has given its followers a certain degree of manliness and self-respect. Pascal was right when he said that Christianity alone exalted without puffing up and humiliated without abashing. For the eradication of subtlety, corruption, double-dealing, unreliability, disorderliness, and indiscipline—all of which mar our public life—we need the revolutionary power of Christ.

Turning to the more practical aspects of national life in India, we believe that communalism is an evil which can be best treated by Christianity. Hindu politics is likely to remain caste politics for a long time; and Muslim politics is likely to remain tribal politics. Christianity alone is capable of giving a truly national and international outlook. It alone can free a man from village politics and make him think in terms of world politics.

The prevailing communalism in the country has affected Indian Christians. But as yet it is only skin deep. It has not yet become fanaticism. No one has heard of an Indian Christian communal riot or of an Indian Christian running amok and cutting the throat of a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh for the glory of God. Christianity and fanaticism or Christianity and communalism can have nothing in common.

If the Christian is to make a real contribution to a communal-ridden India, he should give up his opportunism. The common plea that one would like to be a nationalist but circumstances force one to be a communalist, is not worthy of our Master. "Heads we win, tails you lose" is not the Christian way of looking at things. The Christian should remember that it is his glorious privilege and sacred duty to blaze the trail and not follow the line of least resistance. He cannot have the best of both worlds. He should shun communalism in thought, word, and deed; and work for a national solution of our problems. So long as communalism prevails, India is bound to be a C 3 nation. To say that we are Christians first and afterwards Indians is sheer nonsense. There is no inner contradiction between the two loyalties. We are both Indians and Christians.

Caste and untouchability constitute a fortress of Hindu orthodoxy which can only be stormed by the dynamite of Christianity. So long as this iniquitous system prevails, India is bound to be a by-word on the lips of outside nations. What the ultra-orthodox among Hindus forget is that we cannot keep any body down without dragging ourselves to his level. Mere temple-entry is not enough. The so-called Depressed classes should be given economic opportunity and social equality. Mahatma Gandhi believes that caste should be retained after abolishing untouchability. This seems neither possible nor desirable. Caste and untouchability should disappear altogether.

Provincialism is another field which offers ample scope for the practice of Christian truths. It is unfortunate that just when India's feet are set on the road to complete self-government, provincialism should loom large in the foreground. One of India's curses in the past has been its tendency to split into many petty kingdoms and rival states. If this fissiparousness is to be nipped in the bud, we want men who can envisage the whole of India as a single unit and who will do every thing possible to strengthen the national cause. Movements such as 'Bihar for Biharis' and 'Andhra Desa for the Andhras', if carried beyond a certain point, will bring common ruination. The present anti-Hindi agitation in certain parts of South India is not calculated to the best interests of the country. The Christian ought to be able to rise above differences of language, racial origin, local custom and traditions. While safe-guarding the legitimate rights of the people of a province, nothing should be done to encourage the feeling that the Madrasi, the Bengali, and the Panjabi belong to three different worlds. Each province in India has its own peculiar contribution to make and Christian missions and Christian churches should do all that is possible to promote interprovincial fellowship and harmony.

Training in constructive citizenship offers another great field for the practice of the Christian Teaching. From the Christian point of view, to be a good man and a good citizen are practically identical. Even the best of constitutions is bound to break down if the people who are to operate it do not possess civic virtues of the highest order. It is a notorious fact that the civic virtues are very poorly developed in India. Individual and group selfishness is rampant everywhere. Lack

of consideration for others, i.e., throwing litter on public roads, playing music at all hours, and utter carelessness in the use of public property, are all too well known to require comment. Political etiquette has not yet been properly understood. The spirit of sportsmanship is still lacking in the field of politics. Party politics easily become partisan politics and people forget that there is no reason why political opponents should regard themselves as personal enemies. Ability to think for oneself and to weigh carefully the different sides of a question before arriving at a conclusion has still to be developed. At times people are swayed by undue hero-worship, and at other times they show an utter disregard for their leaders. Into national politics are introduced such irrelevant issues as caste and sectarian differences. In the changing of these conditions, the part that Christian democracy can play is indeed great. To the Christian, every man is of infinite value in the sight of God and should, therefore, be provided with the necessary opportunity for the development of the best in him. At the same time social unity and solidarity should be maintained and, to this end, a spirit of co-operation and mutual helpfulness should be inculcated in every follower of Christianity.

Social and economic injustice is another of the great problems confronting India in the solution of which Christianity can play a leading role. This is a world problem and calls for a world solution. Even the man in the street to-day knows that there is a gross maldistribution of the economic needs of life. Under the protecting wings of Protestantism in the West, capitalism and private property played an important part in the Western economy. But these institutions have proved thoroughly inadequate to meet the needs of modern life. It is a moot question whether socialism is not the next step in the development of the human spirit. Whatever may happen in the future, one finds no reason why the Christian should not adopt the motto "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." We need to socialise Christianity and Christianise socialism. This will involve among other things the adaptation of early Christian communism to the conditions of our present day world.

One further way in which Christianity can save the soul of India is in helping India to maintain a proper balance between the claims of nationalism and those of internationalism. No lover of India wants that Indian nationalism should

assume any of the neurotic forms it has assumed in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and militant Japan. We do not want nationalism to become a synonym for racial persecution, for militarism or for the economic and political exploitation of the helpless peoples of the world. The greatest need of the day is for an international outlook. Mankind will commit suicide if it does not give due heed to the claims of humanity and internationalism. The Christian should learn to look beyond the boundaries of his own State and society and cultivate a regard and concern for the welfare of mankind as a whole. A sound nationalism can only be developed in relation to a just and lasting internationalism. This means that the true Christian ought to be a good nationalist and a better internationalist.



# CHAPTER XIII

## INDIAN CHRISTIANS UNDER SWARAJ

BY A. N. SUDARISANAM

### I

#### SOME FEATURES OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

Let us first be clear about the nature of Indian politics. Time was, some years ago, when politics was the concern of thinkers and leaders alone, to whom it was a leisure time occupation. The masses lived in 'placid contentment' even as recently as 1917, the year of Mr. Montagu's personal survey as Secretary of State for India, of the Indian National situation, for the purpose of implementing the pledge of responsible government given in Parliament that year. Today, it is the life breath not only of the intelligentsia but of millions of common people, irrespective of whether they are literate or illiterate, rural or urban, the leisurely classes or the hardworking labourers or agriculturists. One hundred per cent of the population may not be stirred alike, but the politically conscious millions so permeate all grades of society as to make possible, universal interest in politics a matter only of a few years. The phenomenal spread of vernacular journalism is clear evidence. Neither is politics a matter of speculation or theoretical discussion. It is the means whereby the aggrieved man in the street seeks and demands redress and expects decisive action. What the man in the street thinks and feels today is soon enough heard in the highest Council Chambers. Indian politics may have its doctrinaire aspects, but its main substance consists of the realities of Indian existence—the hard bread problem, the craving for self-expression, and the aspiration to figure among the progressive nations of the world.

Indian politics cannot be resolved into a set of well-defined, isolated problems, which may be solved in time by the application of specific remedies. It is but a manifestation of the living process of national regeneration exhibiting the multifarious and complicated action involved in growth. No single problem can be isolated for treatment in stages or periods of time marked out for final solution. The conception of scheduled progress has been repeatedly defeated in recent years,



because the incalculable forces implicit, but not all apparent at a moment, have developed on unforeseen occasions and kept up the tempo of crisis in India. One year or even a shorter period is entirely different from another, because any fresh idea or action affecting one department of life produces rapid repercussions in several other departments.

Because political consciousness is new in India, it should not be supposed that India is dabbling in the rudiments of politics. Our problems are precisely the same as the major issues that vex modern Europe. At one bound, we have arrived at a stage of anxieties that Europe with her larger and longer experience is confronting to-day. The nature of the democracy that is to be established, the relationship between religion and the State, between the individual and the State, adjustment of minority rights, class war, problems of imperialism, international relationships, revolutionary methods,—these are as much pressing issues for India as for any nation in Europe. Commensurate with such concerns imposed upon India by world circumstances, has grown Indian ambition for complete independence. Such ideas as sharing in administration, gradual training for self-government, partnership with Britain in guiding India's destiny, Dominion Status as the furthest ultimate goal, have appeared in succession and become obsolete. Indian feeling is that India is entitled to find her own solutions for the major problems that she faces like any other nation. She cannot do this by proxy or under tutelage or in partnership with any other. The intensity and urgency of this feeling is the dynamic of Indian nationalism whose potentialities are but dimly realised.

It is possible to discern certain features of the Indian political development.

The first of these is the process of *national unification*. This is not the same as nation building. By the latter is meant the several measures and reforms which will build up the material life of the people according to modern standards of welfare of the individual and the community. National unification is a different task. Twenty or thirty years ago, India was described with the acquiescence of the people, as not a nation or a country, but as a subcontinent comprising many races, creeds, languages etc. The formula used in Royal messages was "To the Princes and Peoples of India."

It did not imply the recognition of a single nation but of a congeries of people, found by circumstances in a geographical unit. Later, when nationalism began, there was a vague feeling that we were 'a nation'. The term was criticised and ridiculed by onlookers. An academic controversy arose when proof texts were produced on both sides of the dispute. As this consciousness became vivid, we discovered the unity that lay beneath external differences. Occurrences at one end of the country struck a responsive chord at the other end, as was witnessed in the first decade of this century when nationalists and the Government were in conflict. We answered to the description at this stage that a nation is a nation that feels itself a nation. Pride of country, its heritage, culture, grew and there was realisation of the capacity of India to revive and shine as equal with the most modern nations. At the outset of the Gandhian era beginning about 1920, the Indian outlook was ruled by what was known as 'slave mentality'. It was the impotent cry of despair. It gave place to a sturdy sense of self respect. At the present day, no longer do outside observers doubt the existence of a nation as different from 'congeries of peoples'.

This preliminary doubt put out of the way, India has now a clearer conception of more intricate realities. The Indian nation exists as an ancient mansion, but close scrutiny brought about by experience of living politics, discloses to us the cracks and the fissures in the great structure. The fissures must be closed, and the minus quantities of nationhood must be removed. For example, we notice the divorce between urban and rural life and feel that they have run on parallel lines. The claim of linguistic provinces discloses a rift that unites one group and separates it from another. The doctrine of village sufficiency, if economically legitimate, cannot be pressed too far without impairing national solidarity. There is talk of the Hindu nation and the Muslim nation which is an extreme expression of communal consciousness common to all communities. These reveal factors which at present work within the bounds of national consciousness. But if left uncontrolled they may assume serious dimensions and bring down the ancient mansion to ruins. The purpose of Indian politics is therefore to repair these damages wherever they appear. England, France, Germany and other European countries underwent a process of welding of differing elements of the nation for centuries and when nationalism

arose it was not one of its major pre-occupations to unify the nation but to get on with tasks of material progress. On the other hand, Indian politics, besides its duties to perform in the problems of modern life, has the fundamental task of making the composite nation a substantial unity so that differences that grow under stress do not affect the foundations. It will not be a simple process; time will not cure it, solutions will not work themselves out. Well planned, prompt effective action is required as the nation marches forward, to continually repair the breaches that occur in the stress of rapid development.

The second feature of Indian nationalism to note is that in the performance of this task *India is not a free agent*. On the one hand, we have to reckon with the influences of our history and on the other, new world forces are storming us unceasingly. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's favourite theme is that world forces impinge upon us and he queries whether we should be swept off our feet or equip ourselves and generate our own strength to ride the storm. We are almost victims of factors beyond our control. Resist the impact of the world, we cannot. But to imbibe and succumb to every political doctrine and economic experiment without regard for local conditions can end in but irretrievable chaos. Events in Germany, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, and Africa have disturbed our ideas and kept us in a state of perpetual unrest. Apart from political and economic theories, the spirit of materialism and irreligion, shape our ideology at a formative and transitional stage. Under these conditions, the revolutionary temper in the sense that radical thought and action can alone enable India to achieve the requisite measure of modernisation at adequate speed has seized the public mind. The attractive gospel of gradualness of progress is out of court. Time is a great factor and we have not two or three centuries as Europe had, to work out the evolutionary method. This is not speculation but a mere statement of actual experience. Who that knew India ten or twenty years ago would have foreseen the India of 1938 in the religious, social, economic and political spheres? The ferment of ideas is powerful. However insignificant an idea or undertaking might seem at the outset, it is a matter of experience that each of these has served as the rallying point of smaller or larger groups of people. Thus it is that mass movements of different types have swept over the country, some to evaporate and others to gather an ever

increasing momentum, but all to leave a modicum of change over the land. This is true as much of ideas born in the country as of those imported from outside. The question may be anxiously asked—Has India evolved a character, a philosophy or systems of life to discipline and regulate the revolutionary temper that has come to stay in India?

Thirdly, let us note that the modern spirit described above, affecting all, has very *varying effects upon the different communities or religious groups*. The advance made is not uniform in all sections of Indian society. Change occurs in every group inspired by the desire to play a worthy part in the shaping of the country's destiny, but in the general disturbance of equilibrium, the most backward sections are scared into efforts mainly to safeguard their identity, while others already in the van by reason of their earlier enterprise, engage in greater ventures of national duty. Apparently the outlook of the Muslim is communal and reactionary, while that of the Hindu is progressive and nationalistic. Neither is free from the guilt attributed to the other. The Muslim stands in relation to the Hindu today, where the Hindu stood in relation to the British rulers 40 or 50 years. The Hindu was accused in the earlier years of being ruled by racial prejudice, just as the Muslim is charged with communalism today. The true spirit beneath the Hindu unrest emerged in due course as that of patriotism. The Muslim may similarly outgrow the present outlook, once his urgent communal preoccupations subside and his mind is free to be employed in nobler duties for the country. The Depressed Classes, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Sikhs similarly display different characteristics under the diverse influences of the day. Self-preservation is an instinct that deserves sympathy and toleration. Placed in the setting of a country-wide revolution comprising vicissitudes of many forms, the rivalries and friction must be taken to be passing exhibitions of doubt and fear that may be quietened by judicious and timely adjustments.

The differing effects pertain as much to religious and social matters as to the purely political. The first defence of the Hindu religion against external attack was bigotry, but in modern times recourse is had to liberalising and adapting interpretations and practices in accordance with new knowledge. Countless religious reform movements have arisen in the Hindu fold. On the other hand, hardly anything of this nature is

true of Indian Islam which is in the first stage of uncritical reiteration of time honoured traditions. But the Muslim too is the child of enlightenment and will not perpetuate the rule of the dark ages in religion indefinitely. That the Hindu has emancipated himself from the Shastraic social code is an open secret. The Muslim has been slower but he is being jogged out of his social conservatism in certain respects by educated Muslim women. That his social outlook is in serious respects more conservative than that of the Hindus is no criterion for final judgment. Conditions are bound to be equalised in the course of years and friction and suspicions engendered in the course of social legislation affecting all communities, can only be understood in the light of the uneven tempo of progress in different sections of society.

The Indian Christian outlook towards nationalism has changed remarkably in the last twenty years in favour of it. For reasons to be explained later, no organised expression of this feeling is manifest yet. There is deep dilemma for them in the transition, but the ferment of nationalism is acting powerfully to set internal changes in the community.

The fourth feature that may be noted is that the moral standards that are expected of India are such as have never been applied to any country in the world. Hence *the demands upon our moral resources are of the highest order*. The Government of India (Reforms) Act 1935 is popularly known as a reactionary measure. In another aspect, it is the most idealistic constitution that has been framed at any time in the world. If the tests it lays down were applied to any of the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, none of them would be entitled to the political status they enjoy. As many as 300 or 320 commandments in this fool-proof constitution tell us what a big nation may do and what it must not do. There are fascinating ideas about internationalism there which other nations in these days find it impossible to practise. Its economic doctrines conflict with the primary interests of India and they are not under Indian control. If the Village Industries Association realised its dreams, it would affect a market upon which British economic life depends. The revolution in the economic order which India needs urgently would involve measures which are forbidden by an Act, which stands practically completely for the perpetuation of systems of exploitation that were established in a decadent period of Indian history. As for political action, the Act sets severe limits.

Other nations enjoyed the licence of barbarism or semibarbarism in attaining their goal of political and economic independence. India's methods must be free of all taint and must be of a rectitude unprecedented in history. What should be the moral strength of a nation, that at the moment that it is subject to the worst influences from the outside world, is forbidden to employ them, but enjoined to adopt only the very best and most idealistic ways conceivable? And whether it has conformed to the standard is not left for self-scrutiny, but is a matter of judgment for a distant nation.

The type of democracy dictated to us is not what the so called democratic nations have adopted—that which has placed the wealthy landlord and the industrial magnate in power at the expense of the normal rights of the underprivileged; that which has placed the army and navy and the church at the disposal of the powerful to suppress the weak; that which has reared an educational system and social ideals, to suit the needs of the governing classes, allowing little scope for the lower strata of society to exert an influence commensurate with the services they render to the nations. True, the lopsided development of democracy has been but recently detected and assailed in the West, but with such knowledge at our disposal, we cannot aspire for anything less than a perfect democracy free of all these taints. At the outset of our experiments in self-government, we are challenged with the moral purposes of democracy and are not to engage in the political expedencies by which other democratic nations have arrived at their present day lessons.

That India cannot grudge the tests imposed upon her, is the happy result of even more imperious moral demands set for her from within her own borders. By insistence upon truth and non-violence in thought, word and deed at every moment. Mahatma Gandhi has prescribed an immutable law for the entire nation, and held up a level of life which seems the only way of meeting the challenge of British rulers. The leader has not accepted defeat in spite of apparent failures. His faith in his countrymen is unbounded, though they have forsaken him on more occasions than one in the past fifteen years and more. Putting Mahatmaji's ideals and the test of British rulers together, we may truthfully exclaim and take to heart the lesson that the most idealistic way is the most practical way. Our rights then none may cavil at.

The fifth feature of Indian life to notice is the evolution of the relationship between *Politics and Religion*. Within our own lifetime, we have witnessed the dark and the bright side of interactions between the two. The problem appears in our midst in an unprecedented manner and probably India will be called upon to offer a more abiding solution in this regard than the temporizing expedients practised in other countries through the centuries.

One remarkable feature of the Indian development is the spread of the desire for service to the needy. A conference of social workers was a rarity twenty years ago. Now the country resounds with such conferences all through the year promoted by organisations working for many causes. The picture of the poor and the ignorant is vivid in the minds of all those whose main interest some years ago was exclusively politics. It is not the Government that initiates them: rather has the newly awakened conscience of the public put to shame an apathetic official agency and produced a similar reorientation there. Such gatherings and organisations are made up of Government servants, teachers, lawyers, businessmen, journalists, religious and social workers—all these representing different religions. They are engaged in their different avocations, earning their livelihood, but are keenly conscious of their duty to fellowmen and are pledged to arduous service, not to intermittent good deeds alone. I doubt if twenty years ago, gatherings of this character would have been possible, of men in various walks of life being marked by devotion to social welfare and concern for the poor. The change is due to the new spirit of patriotism which has kindled aspirations for a new order of life and elevated dull souls to the level of heroism and sacrifice. But observe more closely, there are signs that even the sublime feelings generated by patriotism do not provide the sustaining power for service. The discussions prove beyond doubt, that the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian each relates his activities to the promptings of religion. Far from being a fortuitous relationship, there is the logic of cause and effect between religion and service, as we see in our generation.

In these discussions may be heard appeals to religion to teach us the virtues of toleration, sympathy, regard for the rights of others and several other qualities that are needed to deliver us from the waywardness of current politics. We

search for unshakeable principles to steer us through the frictions of politics and when text books fail us and when the fallibilities of politics and parties mislead us, our appeal lies to those superior qualities that religion may apply to politics.

On the other hand, there is a dark side in which religion appears as the meek tool of politics. The milder critic—like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—says keep religion in the back ground. It is the cause of delay in Indian unity. Others have it that religion has been the bane of India, retarding material advancement. There is reason for the complaint, for we know, how in the name of religion, individual leaders and communities, have advanced selfish aims.

Methods discovered by other countries to resolve the conflict between religion and politics are not open to India. Japan has, by an ingenious way, identified religion with nationalism and except in the case of a few men of profound convictions, an antagonism between the two does not exist. Russia has dispensed with religion altogether. Germany's is thoroughness of another kind. She has rewritten Scriptures to conform to her political science. Britain enjoyed the advantage of splendid isolation, undisturbed by constant political crises and threats from outside. She, therefore, had centuries at her disposal to evolve a solution of the relationship between politics and religion. We cannot say that the result is satisfactory, but religion in England has been preserved against the onslaught of politics and has permeated the outlook of society to such an extent as to become an ineradicable element in life.

The Indian spirit is opposed to the methods of Turkey, Japan, Russia, and Germany. Indeed there are too many scriptures to permit the venture of rewriting. On the other hand, we do not have centuries at our disposal to allow the method of slow experiment and adjustment that Britain chose. Religion and politics have become suddenly intertwined in the process of national regeneration and their functions and limits are not clearly discernible in the heat of controversies. Mistakes bring their nemesis and mistakes occur all the time and are fateful in their consequences. It is a sore perplexity. Both these forces of life are formative influences in national action and their degeneration through conflict forebodes a dark future. The problem demands profound thought on our part.



## II

**THE SELF GOVERNMENT THAT IS EVOLVING**

What is the nature of the Government that is evolving in these conditions? Swaraj as understood from the development of other nations, means the fulfilment of material ambitions without any higher motives than those of a safe and comfortable life under conditions which the people concerned may regulate solely by themselves. It may also be the instinct to be independent and free but devoid of any distinct objective beyond. In this case the inspiration for the struggle has a moral quality. Though not explicitly planned for, national greatness and moral growth, such as there is, may follow as a later development in a state of freedom. European nations, America and Japan illustrate this and have thus justified the value of liberty. On the other hand, freedom may end in opposite results. Hitlerian Germany is the result of liberation from the tyranny of Versailles, but the government that has grown there in that period belies the moral impulse that secured freedom. In either type of development, the methods adopted to secure freedom often prove to be repugnant to standards of justice and peace.

In India the nation and the government are bound to take a different course. The impulse for freedom is not primarily a political ambition, though that element is undoubtedly powerful. Four or five decades ago, more exclusively under the sway of Western thought, Indian freedom was conceived as a political emancipation and as an end in itself. Today freedom is regarded as but a means to an end. The ultimate objective has become defined as an India which would be the resuscitation and continuation of past greatness. The Indian soul must be rescued from decay, reshaped and made a fit instrument to serve the cause of humanity. The past is more emphatically the inspirer of our ambitions than is a desire for independence borrowed from the West.

So much is said to point out the fact that self-government in India is being shaped in an atmosphere of meek suffering rather than of militant arrogance. Sacrifice is recognised as the main pathway to self-government. It was at first a matter of necessity, because it was the struggle of the weak against a strong ruler. But the idea of necessity bred despair, as the growth of terrorists in parts of India proved. Suffering

as a forced necessity cannot be sustained in a prolonged struggle, but suffering as an invincible moral force, and as the foundation of national character, gives the confidence of ultimate conquest of the self and the enemy. It is in the latter spirit that Mahatma Gandhi led his country into a fearless battle with the British Government. True, from the British side, it has been said that self-government for India is the free gift of Britain to India. We need not debate here the gift theory but shall merely point out that Britain recognises that there has been suffering in India in the struggle for Swaraj and why it was so. To-day none respects Gandhiji and the Indian National Congress so much as Britain which honours a game fighter.

Congress rules nine out of eleven provinces of British India as the first set of popular governments, not by virtue of the proved administrative capacity of its leaders or their superior knowledge of politics, but solely because the rule of sacrifice is paramount in its ideology. An electorate educated in this gospel is relentless in its further expectations and expects the new governments to carry into their administrative role the spirit that won them office. In point of efficiency, they have proved as good administrators as the seasoned bureaucracy of the past era—in itself a sufficient achievement. In measures for the material advancement of the people, social legislation, struggle for further measure of self government, the record is not disappointing. But is there in the heart of these Ministries genuine concern for the poor and the courage and the selflessness to wreck themselves if need be in the fight against well entrenched vested interests? On a review of the past of eighteen months, one must say that the expected note has undoubtedly been dominant and has contributed to the formation of national character.

What the Congress Ministries do in their provinces does not end there, but powerfully influences non-Congress administrators. Non-Congress political parties too like the Muslim League, are obliged to adopt the standard and would suffer by comparison, if there is not in them an equal measure of selflessness.

But will not, do not, the Congress Ministries flounder in the hard realities of day to day administration conducted amidst conflicts, jealousies, suspicions, uncontrollable expectations of

the electorate and the inherent weaknesses of party organization? There is no delusion about the potency of these obstacles. But these are treated as additional tests to be satisfied. Solutions of some sort might be found for these, but if such solutions are manipulations inconsistent with the nobler protestations made, the solution would discredit rather than enhance the reputation of the party.

India has but taken the first step in self government and Purna Swaraj is still a long way off. This is no time to rest on oars as every citizen knows. The further steps towards self government cannot be taken in any other manner than in the past; more, not less sacrifice will be called for. The most crucial fight with the British Government has yet to come. The dynamic must be moral owing to the extraordinary arduousness of the task and to retain leadership, any political group, must both as a government and as a political party, display the utmost selflessness.

Another aspect of self government is equally significant in its bearings upon the public and upon Indian Christians. It is its strictly secular character as compared with anything that has gone before. Two decades ago at the outset of the dyarchic regime under Mr. Montagu's scheme, an Indian member of the Bengal Government declared on the occasion of an appeal for help in a widespread distress, that the Government was a business organization, not a charitable institution. The statement shocked the public then, but the element of truth in it has been amplified in later circumstances, till it is now an axiom not of a foreign but of an Indian government. The explicit abjuration of any religious motive or tendency in the Government as such, is a *sine qua non* of its retention of public confidence. The insistence upon this is so severe that in the subconscious regions of the public mind, even the personal piety of an individual member of the Ministry is an evil portent for some group or other of the people. This is a new experience for India. The country, wholly or in parts, has been under either Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or Buddhist rule, with the ruler and the governing classes actively identified with a particular faith but tolerating minority ones. Non-interference with the latter may have implied distant respect for them. In any case, exclusion of the religious faith was never an ideal of government. It was rather the fostering of all religions with a preference for the

Ruler's. A variant of this doctrine was adopted by the British Government along with the first step in the secularisation of authority. The Government pledged itself to neutrality, but significantly Queen Victoria in her great Proclamation of 1858 was proud to own that her inspiration lay in her religion and therefore she recognised the value of other religions for their adherents. The Government did not intrude its religion upon the people, but in so far as there was the exclusion of Indians from the Government and its controlling centres, administration fell into the hands of a single community. Hence arose the popular talk of "the Christian Government." From the side of the people, it was government of a particular religious type that was in control: that it did not interfere with other religions, did not imply absence of the religious factor.

Secularisation of Government in the modern sense means more than all these. It amounts to a call for a repression in every section of government of any religious instinct, meaning thereby not a spiritual attitude, but the peculiar bias that a particular faith gives to an individual. Every administrative question can be discussed only on its special merits, in which, considerations of practical wisdom and business acumen alone must be applied. Fairplay, expediency and mutual accommodation will be the guide. "Monarchies live by their honour, republics by their virtues." So that the process of secularisation need not destroy honourable conduct. But the problem is how far such conduct can sustain itself by the inspiration of a secular patriotism, apart from the nourishment of religion upon which Indian life is dependent.

Secularization of Government is a guarantee against religious partisanship in governance. This does not however correspond to the general attitude of the people towards life. Speaking today they remain "incorrigibly" religious and if they demand a secular government, it is not because they are convinced of an inherent divorce between religion and life, but because of the intense suspicion of religious bias in the heart of some or all members of a Ministry. The religious man or the average citizen feels safer under a non-religious Minister than under one with leanings towards some faith. With more of toleration than there is, there should have been no demand for secularization, but rather an aspiration to prove to the world that the Indian genius was true to itself in developing the capacity of the people under the spiritual impulse.

Under such circumstances, it is practical wisdom to insist on the secular nature of government : but there are dangers to guard against and the solution is not a final one. We have referred already to the fact that India is called upon to produce a composite nation. Such a project is possible on a non-religious basis and that is what many observers wish for. That would still leave in doubt the question of liberty of every faith to develop each in its own way without any hindrance. Possibilities of conflict lie here. As custodians of law and order, the secular government may deal summarily with either the alleged aggressor or with both on some notion of impartiality. This would mean not the reconciliation of combatants, but a suppression amounting to curtailment of religious liberty. If arrived at with the strictest impartiality, it becomes established as a fundamental principle that government interference with religious rights is a legitimate duty of the ruler. If such impartiality is imperfect, then one or other of the parties must suffer. It comes to this then, that under Indian conditions, the supposed neutrality towards religion on the part of government is an untenable and precarious principle, in danger of contravention in any exigency. A foreign government may be neutral, but neutrality in that case would be synonymous with callousness, as it proved to be in the case of the British attitude to social reform measures. It did not mean a well reasoned attitude towards every religion such as would entitle it to employ power as an harmoniser of conflicts rather than as a policeman keeping the combatants at unapproachable distance. If the Indian government cannot be neutral in regard to social reform measures, neither can it be towards religions as such without the aforesaid danger of turning out to be a ruler suppressing all religions alike. The concrete question is, should an Indian Ministry be neutral in this sense or cultivate the more active attitude of being uniformly helpful to all religions—as a united band showing the way of transcending the rivalry of faiths ?

### III

#### THE POSITION OF INDIAN CHRISTIANS

Speaking in a general way, the interest of Indian Christians in this situation lies along three main lines, viz. (1) their economic stability, (2) spiritual growth, (3) avenues of service to the motherland.

*A. Economic Stability.* The Indian Christian community is one of the modern communities of India, the others being Parsees, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Sikhs. As compared with the countless religions and caste sects of the ancient Hindu community and excluding Muslims who though popularly known as a community are large enough to be classed as one of the two major basic sections of the Indian nation, the groups referred to are either foreign importations or entirely new creations out of the local population. They have acquired a distinctive and ineffaceable character of their own, destined to be preserved in any further evolution of the nation. This last remark must be qualified as regards the Indian Christian community. Alone among the groups mentioned, does this community have qualms about the justification for its separate identity and the wisdom of retaining it. The Parsees and Europeans were integrated abroad and the dissolution of their racial features in India is impossible. The Anglo-Indians, as a mixture born of the soil, were shunned altogether by their parents but just tolerated by Indians and hence their coalescence with other communities did not follow. Economically, they had to create a new sphere for their livelihood and hence their conspicuous presence in the modern technical professions. The Sikhs were born as a religious group, but a separate organization was forced on them by the political necessity of self defence under hostile Muslim rule. Their remarkable foresight lay in their preserving their economic roots in the soil like the Hindu race, thus avoiding the embarrassments that confront the Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians in the way of earning their living. The Indian Christian community is a religious entity like the Sikhs, but for various reasons, partly, not wholly excusable, it lacked the wisdom of the Sikhs and fell into the error of Anglo Indians in cutting off its economic roots. If necessities compelled it to form itself into a community, there was no obligation to carry that step to the extreme limit of making of itself a wholly separate economic unit, obliged to start on an altogether fresh quest of avocations of its own unrelated to its past. If to-day the liberal professions are its home, it is due to a false start. This peculiarity marks off the community not only from the other modern communities but from the corresponding groups in other non-Christian lands.

Yet another feature that distinguishes this minority is its complex nature in contrast to the homogeneity of the

others. Of it, it can be said as of no section of India, large or small, that it is the composite Indian nation in miniature. It is drawn from all grades of Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs. In Religion, it shares the infinite shades of spiritual outlook derived from these sources, and has added to it an equal variety of racial and denominational attitudes, adopted from the continents of Europe and America. Economically and socially, it is as varied as the multiple composition of the Indian nation. The Church and the community are strong and weak in parts simultaneously and thus is prolonged indefinitely its transitional character. The consolidation of the diverse elements into a unit for whose further development it is possible to prescribe designs—involves a sociological problem that has never seriously troubled foreign missions, the creators of the community. But the community which has to fit itself into the general society feels the imperative urgency of the duty. The State cannot be expected to solve the problem for them. Added to this, the community is kept in a state of continuous unsettlement by large accessions.

The point is, that a community not too large in numbers but heterogeneously constituted, and related to modern professions as isolated units, has an artificial existence, whose economic foundations may be removed from underneath by any change of policies, either in national life or in administrative authorities. The community flourished well in the liberal professions much beyond their population ratio but with the invasion of that sphere by the hitherto backward classes, seeking uplift in the same manner, Indian Christians lose ground, by the application of the rule of proportion. The Christian community is therefore suddenly called upon to distribute itself in a wide range of business occupations and agricultural pursuits as different from its present concentration in a few paid professions. The return to the more natural economic processes of society requires the recapturing of the instinct lost since the transfer of their forefathers into the new fold. It involves apprenticeship on a large scale in non-Christian communities. But such is not an easy condition to secure. In the meanwhile, they are being rapidly displaced from some of their favourite occupations such as educational and medical departments and clerical offices. The set back is all the greater, because the present generation of Christians has reached the peak of its prosperity in a continuous economic rise,

and, while its men and women were looking forward to raise their communal level, comes the sudden arrest. This is not a cry of despair, but a note of explanation for the community's apparent obsession in its material welfare. Grave effects upon the social and religious outlook follow.

While the foregoing is a picture of the educated section of the community, a more serious aspect of the communal position is manifested among rural Christians. Their number grows by leaps and bounds. In their case, it is a transference from the natural soil to an artificial one as referred to above, with the more serious danger at this stage, that their loss is greater than that of their forefathers. Two or three generations ago, it was an economic gain to join the Christian community, for even the meagre facilities offered in the latter compared very favourably with their pre-Christian level. In the new official and national experiments for rural uplift, the Christian convert is left in the cold, while foreign missions are contracting their activities. Government aid is so arranged that the non Christian poor can forge ahead faster than the Christian. In addition, there is the new public atmosphere that owing to communal and religious zeal, non Christians are less sympathetic to Christians than before. No solution is in sight, for no single or cut and dry scheme will solve the dilemma. Many factors enter into the solution and they are not all under our control.

The clamour at the gates of the Government might bring slight relief if any, but Indian Christians will have to make up their minds that the paid professions are finally closed which means the economic collapse of the community. Indian Christians must be ramified in society—a matter of self help and enterprise in a not too favourable atmosphere.

(b) *Spiritual Growth*: One conviction has been forced upon the Indian Christian community as a matter of urgency after the introduction of the new Constitution. It is that proof for the validity of Christianity in India hereafter will rest far more upon Indian Christians than upon foreign missionaries. That which was talked of as a future likelihood has become suddenly an immediate necessity. As exponents and exemplars of Christianity, as the dynamo in evangelistic work, as organisers of humanitarian activities, as the spokesmen of Christian organizations before the Government and all local administra-



tive councils, as experts on educational and medical bodies, it was hitherto the foreign missionaries that counted and drew the attention of the non-Christian world. The Indian Christian community possessed no influence. Its conduct good or bad, its achievements or failures reflected more upon the missionary than upon the community. To the general public, they had the interest of experimented products. The active agent was the experimenter—the missionary.

The position is now reversed practically in its entirety. By the abolition of the principle of nomination in all administrative bodies from the highest to the lowest, foreign missionaries for whom this was the only method of service in such bodies, is now closed. Their place is now occupied by elected Indian Christians. In educational and medical bodies, they still have a place, but to a less extent than before. These are all indications of how in general Indian Christians are becoming the spokesmen of the community in influential places instead of foreign missionaries. As evidence of the Christian spirit, it was and still is a practice to refer to the noble humanitarian activities of foreign missions. The new question added is—has Christianity communicated this spirit to Indian Christians? The public is not convinced of that, for the community has not been able, for obvious reasons, to build up impressive philanthropic institutions. On the other hand, when nationalism called forth enthusiastic response from non-Christians for selfless and courageous public service along different avenues, Indian Christians did not demonstrate on a heroic scale what the Christian impulse was. This failure has made the non-Christian sceptical about our claims to follow a higher ideal than they.

More might be set to explain the transference of the custody of the Gospel from the foreign missionary to the Indian Christian in the eyes of non-Christians. But space forbids. There is however one matter which overshadows all these in importance as central. It is in regard to the attitude of Christianity to non-Christian faiths. The foreign missionary might be forgiven his misunderstanding of other religions and the false authority he derived from the Gospel for being contemptuous of them. The Indian Christian who is ignorant of the part Indian religions have played in life must be regarded as a foreigner in the land out of sympathy with his fellow countrymen, not only in respect of religion,

but in the whole range of life. It would be practising the doctrine of the Elect to the point of superciliousness. India will not tolerate that attitude any longer and the community will fall under a permanent suspicion of being an enemy of historic national religions. It is not sufficiently realised how, therefore, the relation of Christianity to non-Christian faiths has become a matter of urgent and crucial importance. It is not a theological or an abstract question any longer. It has a bread and butter aspect to it so far as the community is concerned. Upon it depends our friendly relations in general with other communities in the future. The subject is so vast and intricate that a whole field of literature has opened out for it. What is stressed in this chapter is the mundane part of it. When self government is established, it will not, as preceding governments have done, proceed upon the large and nebulous assumption that Christianity is so necessary a moral force in India that it must be provided with facilities for progress. Self Government, almost exclusively in possession of non-Christians, believes rather that India's religions are as good as Christianity and any attempts to detract from their value must be discouraged or even suppressed. Self government would conceive its duty to be, so far as it is free to interest itself in religion, to encourage the reform and purification of the ancient heritage and repel any encroachments upon their stability.

Two results follow directly. Christianity must stand shorn of every particle of its non-Indian character and must vindicate itself as a product of the land. Not all the bright patches of Church history elsewhere and of missionary record in this land, no measure of arguments, not all the influence or money of the white man, not all passivity or tolerance of the non-Christian will avail Christianity in India hereafter. They were powerful aids hitherto for the propagation of the Gospel but for one reason or another, they have disappeared simultaneously and the Indian Christian, as it were, is left alone in the company of his Lord to prove *afresh* to India the inherent reality and power of his faith. His interpretation of the Gospel must be his own born of his Indian instincts. His theology will be scrutinised from the Indian standpoint by powerful thinkers who defy the entire thought world of the West. If a programme of life and work were worked out for the Christian community to implement its professions, it would be alarming in its magnitude and quality. Just as India at the moment of awakening from her slumber is suddenly confronted by precise-

ly the same complex problems that modern Europe faces, so does the Indian Christian community, at the dawn of a sense of vocation, face in all its magnitude and character the urgency of the Christian contribution to national, political, moral, and spiritual problems of India. This calls for hard rethinking on our part all along the line and a reorientation of our outlook even to the detail of the dress we wear and the language we speak. It involves for the Indian Christian the inauguration of a type of activities which he can undertake immediately with his slender resources to prove how indigenous factors become more potent under Christian impulse than under any other. As but one example we may quote what might happen to higher medical and educational institutions. In our own Province, the Government has made it clear that expensive institutions are beyond the financial capacity of the poor tax payer. Government money will not hereafter be locked up in grants in aid to these centres but will be distributed over a wider area to reach the villagers. Such an unexceptionable rule will cripple large mission institutions and deprive the Indian Christian of the largest avenue of service. He must create other activities less costly and of greater efficacy.

The second of the results referred to above consequent on the advent of self government is even more fundamental. It is to circumscribe the meaning of his religion for the Indian Christian. Just what are the rights that he can claim from his government? It is strictly what he may regard as freedom of worship. That is granted and we need have no fear that we shall not be allowed to read the Bible or attend Church worship. But the right of a Christian to extend his activities among non-Christians stands challenged. On principle, the non-Christian is convinced that Christian preaching is an uncalled for activity in this land of religions and is definitely wrong when the methods are examined. Theoretically, he agrees that preaching is legitimate, but he dissociates this from conversion, for he argues, that under Indian conditions, conversion can rarely be genuine—so rarely indeed so, as to justify a policy of its suppression. The controversy is well known and needs no elaboration. The greater danger lies in the tacit ban upon activities that bring Christians into intimate contact with the poor. The good done is recognised, but if thereby the poor and the ignorant are drawn into Christian company, it becomes “exploitation”

of the helpless. Directly or indirectly the future promises the policy of breaking of contacts between the Christian and his services to the poor. We are here then called upon to accept a new definition of religious life—that it must be confined to one's own worship and can include no other item. That which is fundamental to Christian nature, viz. the expression of faith in action is challenged.

We have spoken of two results that follow from the ideas that self government generates. Their incompatibility must be noted. On the one hand, the Indian Christian must prove the worth and efficacy of his faith by an actual contribution to national regeneration in the material, moral and spiritual spheres. On the other hand, if he attempts such a programme, he is liable to be suspected of a desire to broaden his community and religion, by the insidious destruction of his neighbours. The position is intriguing and is made difficult of solution because of lack of adequate intercourse between Christians and non-Christian leaders. No solution is conceivable before this spirit of exclusiveness is broken down. Hope lies in the better appreciation of true motives on either side and greater knowledge of each other's outlook.

(C). The third interest of Indian Christians is the *search for avenues of service* to the motherland. Of the difficulties in the way, the preceding paragraphs give an indication. The new factor in recent years, has been the development of nationalism and a sense of Christian duty among Indian Christians and a corresponding feeling of frustration. Christian youth and Christian women, like those of other communities, have been the first to be affected by the new outlook in India and have been inspired to serve the needy. They are eager to participate in social service activities, literacy campaigns, international fellowship gatherings, Harijan uplift, rural reconstruction programmes. But I have rarely attended any general conferences or centres of work promoted for these purposes where the presence of a Christian does not disturb others. On the side of the Christian this is a serious embarrassment, for he proceeds upon one clear conviction. He is convinced that no longer can he consider Foreign Mission auspices the only one where he can and should serve. To him co-operation with non-Christians in their noble activities is a duty and one means of breaking down the exclusiveness of his community. For him, it is emancipation from the shackles of old world notions

that Christianity can be nurtured and practised only within the Christian fold.

Popular Ministries are not directly responsible for this attitude of tacit jealousy and suspicion. But they supply clues that indirectly make the attitude legitimate. Recently, the Madras Government constituted Harijan Advisory Boards to help Harijan uplift work in every district and took care to make them exclusively Hindu in composition. The undoubted experts in this field are Christians and their exclusion was an official recognition of the popular belief that the work concerned should be the exclusive privilege and duty of Hindus alone. The psychological effect of this and similar acts upon the public mind is to effect a segregation of Christians in the most needy fields of service.

But the work that awaits aspiring servants of the poor is too large in India to be closed by the most rigorous policies of the aforesaid kind. Nothing that has happened need deter the community from gathering momentum for service. Vast fields lie untouched for pioneer ventures and if the old ones are closed, new ones are no less a challenge. That calls for from this generation of the community wider conceptions of duty and more daring enterprise.

We may refer to two examples alone. The first is the communal tension. That is primarily a human problem and not one that can be solved by political devices or administrative policies. They have been tried only to make a bad situation worse. The neutral third party—the British—have no place in this field hereafter. It needs the personal healing influences of friends to build up relationships from the bottom at every point of contact of the conflicting elements. The beginnings of peace must be conceived locally and Christians—foreign missionaries included—who are about the least partisan group in this respect, can help to rebuild society from small areas to large ones. This is but one aspect of the larger duty of national unification to which we referred at the outset.

Secondly, Christians can help to redeem social service activities from their amateurish character by a scientific study and presentation of the conditions in the field and of the programmes that might be tried. This is but one detail of the

entire field of literary labours that India urgently needs today. By reason of larger contacts with the West and being good students in general, Christians may place at the disposal of India through literature the enormous wealth of experience that other parts of the world have in the matter of social regeneration, not at the cost of religion but with its aid.

It must be recognised that when such timely needs as the two we have mentioned are met by a group, non Christians are not slow to welcome them or to cherish their authors. The suspicions referred to cannot be dissolved easily or in a short while. What might enhance their value is for Christians to supplement their present activities by pioneering new methods of service which would capture the heart and mind of non-Christian India.



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